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MAXWELL DREWITT.

A Novel.

By F. G. TRAFFORD,

AUTHOR OF "GEORGE GEITH," "CITY AND SUBURB," "PHEMIE KELLER," "TOO MUCH ALONE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MAXWELL DREWITT.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNFORTUNATE LIKENESS.

NEXT day Harold Drewitt was brought before Mr. Boice, charged with having on the first of August, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-four, stolen two thousand pounds, the property of the Dundalk and Drogheda Banking Company; when the following evidence was produced:—

Jeremiah Kearns having been sworn, deposed, that on the day in question he was an up passenger by the five o'clock express train from Dundalk to Drogheda. Had with him two thousand pounds in notes, and one thousand pounds in gold and silver. The gold and silver was packed in a wooden box hooped with iron; the notes he carried in a

black bag. Asked the guard not to put any one in the carriage with him, and his request was complied with, until the train arrived at Dunleer, about eight miles from Drogheda. At that station the guard said he would be obliged to give him a fellow-passengor, but it was only a young gentleman going on to Dublin. Seeing the prisoner, made no objection, and they travelled on together to Drogheda, where the witness got out.

When he reached the Bank, he found he had lost his bag; spoke to the car-driver about it, but the car-driver was positive no bag had been among the luggage, nothing but a portmanteau and the box. Telegraphed at once to Dublin to search the carriages on the arrival of the train in Amiens-street. Telegraphed also that the guard would recollect witness's fellow-passenger.

Telegraphed, and sent messages to all their branches, stopping payment of the notes.

Several of the notes had been changed by Dublin shopkeepers during the period which had elapsed between the first and the fifteenth.

Had received a telegram from the inspector on the previous evening, and identified the prisoner at the police-station. He was dressed differently

on the day in question, and his hair was now a little longer, but he had no hesitation in swearing to him as the youth who had got in at Dunleer.

Prisoner assisted him to lift the box out at Drogheda, and made a remark to the effect that it must have something of value inside. Witness did not suspect such a respectable-looking lad, travelling first class, and belonging apparently to the upper ranks, of stealing his bag. He thought he, witness, had forgotten the bag, and that if any other passengers got in between Drogheda and Dublin, prisoner would be able to give information concerning them. Had heard the description given by several Dublin tradesmen of the person who had changed the notes, and identified that description as answering to his fellow-passenger and the prisoner at the bar.

Had no hesitation in declaring the two to be one and the same person. Was confident he never mentioned that he was carrying money with him; but thought the guard made some joke about there being no fear of that young gentleman robbing him. Was in the habit of taking money from one bank to another; the guard knew him perfectly well.

Peter Monaghan being sworn, stated, that on the

night in question he was acting as guard on the up express train, which arrived at Dundalk at five minutes to five o'clock. Recollected Mr. Kearns getting in at that station, and requesting him, witness, to keep the compartment he occupied empty if possible. Knew Mr. Kearns well. At Dunleer there were an unusual number of passengers waiting for the up train, and consequently asked Mr. Kearns' permission to put prisoner in the same compartment. He was such a genteel-looking young gentleman that he thought there could be no objection. Believed he did make some remark to that effect, but could not be just certain. At Drogheda Mr. Kearns got out, and bade witness good-evening. When witness collected the tickets prisoner was in the train. When the express reached Dublin the station-master told witness about the telegraphic message, and they both asked the prisoner if Mr. Kearns had left a bag in the carriage. Prisoner said, not to his knowledge — that he had not noticed any article at all when the gentleman got out at Drogheda. Had he done so, he would have mentioned it to him, witness, at Balbriggan. Several passengers got into the same compartment at

Balbriggan, and one lady who got in at Drogheda travelled on to Malahide, where every one in that particular carriage got out except the prisoner. About a mile on the Dublin side of Malahide a black bag was found next morning by a labourer working on the line. It must have been thrown out of the right-hand window of the carriage, as it lay between the metals on the down line. He thought from the young gentleman's manner that Mr. Kearns must have taken the bag out of the train, and lost it between the station and the Bank. Never suspected the prisoner.

Had identified him at the station-house the previous evening, but should not have known him in the "wide-awake" he wore. He had on a hat at Dunleer. A hat was sent for and tried on. He was able to swear to him then, though he had fallen away in flesh during the fortnight.

Michael Brinny, tobacconist, was then sworn and examined. Had a shop in College Green. Recollected the first of August. Just as his shutters were being put up on the evening of that day, prisoner came in, and bought a pipe and some Cavendish tobacco. He had not silver enough to pay for these articles, and so he laid down a pound-

note, out of which witness returned him twelve and threepence change. Never saw him before, and never saw him since, until the previous afternoon, when he came to his shop again, and purchased three dozen of cigars, offering a Bank of Ireland one-pound note in payment.

Witness made an excuse about having to send out for change, and kept him in conversation till his assistant fetched a policeman. Prisoner was very violent, struck the policeman in the face, declared he did not know what they were talking about, and gave a great deal of trouble before he was removed to the station-house. Knew him the moment he came into the shop, though his hair had grown longer, and his face thinner since he changed the first note. Thought he tried to disguise his voice, and that he spoke with more of a West of Ireland accent than when he bought the Cavendish.

John Garvan, Daniel Laharan, Thomas Molrhany, and several other respectable shopkeepers identified the prisoner as having made small purchases, and changed notes at their establishments; while Barry Croggan, who appeared with a great lump on his forehead, gave an account of the assault committed

on him by the prisoner; and stated that, but for the assistance rendered by Mr. Brinny and his shopman, he could not have retained his prisoner until another policeman came to help him.

In answer to all these charges, Harold, having been duly cautioned not to criminate himself, stated that there must be some mistake; that he never was at Drogheda in his life; that he knew nothing whatever of the robbery, never having even heard of it till the policeman told him about it the previous day. Very earnestly Harold protested his innocence; he said he had not gone out of Dublin the whole summer, except for a week, the entire of which time he had spent with Mr. Pryor, of Durrow Park. Being asked by the magistrate if he could recollect where he was on the first of August, he said he could not; but upon being told what day of the week the first fell on, he declared he had spent the whole of it in the company of Mr. Francis Gyton, who could swear to the fact.

Being requested to send for Mr. Francis Gyton, he said he did not know where that gentleman was; which reply produced a malevolent chuckle from the "cloud of witnesses," and a statement from police constable Croggan to the effect that

prisoner was anything but a respectable young gentleman, though he believed he had respectable friends. Many of Harold's proceedings were recounted for the magistrate's edification; and whilst every old sin, every mad prank, every boyish folly was brought up in judgment against him, the lad leaned forward and covered his face with his hands to hide the tears of shame and mortification that he had not strength enough to keep back.

He had never been alone in any trouble before —never; and now, in the hour of his bitterest trial, he had not a soul to speak a word in his favour.

"If you give me time, sir," he said at last, looking up and addressing the magistrate, "I will be able to prove I never was near the place; that it is all a mistake—" and then he gave a cry of joy, for Brian, who he thought was far away from Dublin, entered the court at the moment, and offered to find bail to any amount for his reappearance.

If he had not assaulted the officer, most probably his brother's application would have been listened to; but as it was, the magistrate refused to entertain the idea even for a moment.

He could not think of accepting bail in so

serious a case, he remarked, and remanded the prisoner.

"I am innocent, Brian. I know nothing about the money. Don't let them take me back there!" panted out the poor lad in his terror and distress; but Brian could do nothing except go to a solicitor and place the case in his hands, write to Mr. Pryor, and send a telegram to London begging that Mr. Gyton would, if possible, come back to Dublin without delay.

Then he went home, and it was the hardest day's work Brian Drewitt ever performed, facing his mother without Harold. Poor lady! poor mother! though she did not believe one word of the accusation they had brought against her youngest born, still she wept till she had no more tears left to shed at the thought of her boy being in prison —of her darling being dragged to the dock and tried like a common felon.

"I did all I could," said Brian, hoarsely. "I offered to get bail, but they refused it. I was not there time enough to get a solicitor for him, but I have found one since. I have written to Mr. Pryor and telegraphed for Mr. Gyton. Is there anything else you would like tried? Is there

anywhere else you would like me to go? Tell me. You have nothing to do but say what you would wish, and I will endeavour to accomplish it, mother."

It would not be possible in a whole volume to describe the intense tenderness—the womanly compassion Brian managed to put into that one word; and as he spoke it Mrs. Drewitt went up to him and, without speaking a sentence, flung her arms round his neck and kissed him over and over again.

"Mother," he said, "mother darling," and he touched her hair, which was growing grey, grey, and he kissed her forehead, and he let her poor weary head lie on his breast, but her plaint was still, "Harold, Harold, my boy, my boy!"

"I could do no more, mother," Brian repeated, "and nobody can do anything more for a week yet. Mr. Gyton will be over here by that time, and then Harold is sure to be liberated at once."

"Brian," the dear fingers fidgeted with his neck-tie—with the studs in his shirt, "Brian."

"Yes, mother."

"Where did Harold get all the money he has lately had to spend?"

"I have given him some," answered Brian.

"But not enough. I should fear not enough."

In a moment Brian saw where the sting lay; in an instant he perceived that though she would not believe, still that she dreaded.

"Make your mind easy," he answered confidently. "Wherever Harold had his money from, it was not got dishonestly. There is some great mistake, but I could stake my life he is as innocent as I am; whatever the world may think, we must not turn against him—must we?"

She placed a hand on each shoulder, and looked Brian full in the face.

"You are not saying that to comfort me?" she asked. "You have no doubt yourself?"

"Not the slightest."

"You feel confident he was with Mr. Gyton?"

"I know he was. At least, I remember your writing to me on the evening of the first that Mr. Gyton had passed that day through Dublin on his way to Durrow, and that Harold had seen him off from the Broadstone Station. Harold could not have been at Broadstone and Drogheda on the same day; besides, he says he never was at Drogheda in his life. And whatever his faults may be, he is

neither a thief nor a liar. Make your mind easy. It is a case of mistaken identity; but it is confoundedly hard lines for Harold to be locked up instead of the fellow who really did steal the notes."

"You think they were stolen then?" said Mrs. Drewitt.

"They were certainly stolen, and by some one very like Harold; but I have never seen anybody like Harold in my life. It is a strange business, and we must wait with patience for the mystery to be explained."

"It is not easy to have patience, Brian," remarked Mrs. Drewitt, and then she began crying again about her boy—her poor delicate boy, while Brian thought within himself that if the one-half he had heard during the day concerning Harold's mode of life were true, it was no wonder he grew delicate, and pale, and thin.

"Not home any night till well on in the small hours, Mister Brian, as I am a living sinner," remarked Mary-of-all-work to him, "and dhrunk five nights out of the six, and not at the office regular as he ought be. I'm just telling *you*," she finished, "for I wouldn't like that the misthress would hear anything of it. Dear pity her poor

sowl! She thinks the sun was made to rise and set for him." All of which was exceedingly agreeable information for a young man to hear who had his own way to make in the world, and who had not found his path so far strewed at all with roses.

"Never mind," he thought, as he flung himself wearily on his bed, "it is all in the day's work, we shall find rest sometime."

Possibly, but the day occasionally proves very long, and the rest is frequently delayed for an unreasonable period. So Brian discovered, as the years went on, bringing little repose with them.

The Dublin papers were posted as regularly to Kincorth as "The Times" to Durrow, and accordingly Mr. Maxwell Drewitt had the pleasure of seeing his cousin's name figuring largely in a column headed, "Robbery on the Dublin and Drogheda Railway. Arrest of the Supposed Thief."

"That is the end of you, Master Harold, is it?" remarked Maxwell, as he finished reading the report. "I wish it had been Brian instead. Why, bless my soul! he must have been caught the very day he returned from Galway. I will go up to hear if he can prove his alibi, though I dare swear it is a lie, and that he was not with Gyton at all.

He will very likely be transported." Having settled Harold's affairs in which summary fashion, Maxwell went about the house and grounds in his usual manner, and slept soundly, not knowing what the post was bringing to him.

He got his missive while he sat at breakfast, and opened it dreading no evil.

"I should like to see you at once," he read. "Come to Dublin immediately, if possible. It is important that you should do so."

"What can the fellow mean?" marvelled the owner of Kincorth. "What on earth can he want?" Then all in a moment he remembered the trial, and connected the two things together.

"My God!" he thought, "can he have been mixed up in that? Have they mistaken the one for the other?"

He looked for the newspaper which he had put aside in his desk, and spelled over every word of the evidence. "Thinner—hair longer—more of a Connaught accent—did not know him till he put on a hat," he repeated to himself, "and they have got that other boy locked up for it."

He put the paper away again, told his servant to pack his portmanteau, and to order post-horses,

"For I must catch the night mail from Galway to Dublin," he explained to the man, who did not seem to understand things, while he invoked a hundred curses on the head of his wife, who querulously remarked that he was always going from home.

"And always likely to do till you are out of it," he answered, savagely. They had been living a more wretched life than ever, lately, for Lady Emmeline had unexpectedly turned restive, and refused to fall in with her husband's plans, as he had fondly hoped she would.

"Anything but that," she said, firmly. "Anything but another woman's child;" and she relapsed into hysterics whenever he ventured to approach the subject, and adopting the mode of warfare most in favour with her sex, of digging a moat round her citadel and filling it with tears, rendered her position alike invulnerable to threats and entreaties.

He might have known he had no chance of success with her, and by holding his tongue have kept peace, at any rate; but he preferred trying to compass his end, and the result was a state of domestic warfare which caused the servants to

declare emphatically that Kincorth was like hell.]

"They never are but bickering and quarrelling, and snapping at one another from morning till night," said Lady Emmeline's maid to a select assemblage in the servants' hall. "It was only this morning I heard master saying he could wait till she was dead; and mistress answered she would live to spite him."

This was what marriage had done for Maxwell Drewitt and for Lady Emmeline. He had paid his price and got the article he coveted, and this was the result. No wonder he spent much of his time in Dublin; no wonder his heart—for he had some human feelings, some need for human affection—turned hopefully towards his son, whom he meant to make a great man of one day.

A great man! Alas! already his dream castle was tottering to its foundation. It was to prop it up and save it he hastened to Dublin, where the first person he went to seek was a schoolmaster, grave and discreet, who resided near that loveliest of all sea-bathing villages, Bray.

"You wanted to speak to me, Mr. Blosse," began Maxwell; he had travelled all night and

looked haggard and exhausted. "You wanted to speak to me."

"Yes, Mr. Drewitt, particularly," was the reply. "I think we might take a walk if you are not tired. I should like to say what I have got to say out of doors."

"Let us go then," and Maxwell put on his hat.

"You will have some breakfast?"

"Not any; I am ready to go if you are."

"Will you not take a glass of wine?"

"At this hour? no, thank you, Mr. Blosse; let us go," and he moved nervously towards the door.

When they were once out into the open air, he turned towards his companion inquiringly; but Mr. Blosse said, "Not yet," and they walked on—on to the very top of Bray Head; where, unmindful of the view, unmindful of everything in earth, or sea, or heaven, Maxwell demanded what was the matter; what Mr. Blosse had to say.

"That trial, Mr. Drewitt—you know the trial I mean?"

"Yes," Maxwell answered.

"Is not the accused some relative of yours?"

"My first cousin—go on."

"I take it for granted there must be some ex-

traordinary likeness between him and Arthur," continued Mr. Blosse.

"I do not know why you should take anything of the kind for granted, Mr. Blosse," said Maxwell, stiffly. "I really do not."

"The youth who is in custody did not take that money, Mr. Drewitt," observed Mr. Blosse, "and Arthur did; therefore I say some extraordinary likeness must exist between them."

He had been expecting this all along. He had hoped for nothing different from the moment he opened his letters the previous morning. He had faced the question as he drove past the desolate lakes, under the shadow of the lonely hills. He had not concealed the probability of such an announcement greeting him on his arrival at Bray; and yet now, when the blow did fall, Maxwell felt it in every nerve of his body—in every vein of his heart.

He did not know till then what hopes he had built on the chance of what this handsome illegitimate flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood might turn out. He had not realized what dreams he had cherished about him; how he had been turning year after year more and more to

this one thing which belonged to him, which he called his own on earth, till, standing on Bray Head, with the blue sea washing a far different strand from that whereon he was accustomed to gaze below him, with the clear sky above him, he heard Mr. Blosse speak words that might have been read out of a death-warrant, judging by the effect they produced.

For a long time Maxwell stood silent; for a long time he remained staring down on the sea, while he swallowed, drop by drop, the contents of that bitter cup. Then when at last he could speak —when at last his voice would answer to his will, he asked Mr. Blosse to explain himself—to tell him all the particulars.

"Begin at the beginning," said Maxwell, "and do not stop till you get to the end."

"He spent his holidays, as you know," commenced Mr. Blosse, "partly at Killarney, with you, and partly with one of his schoolfellows, whose father has a property near Carlow. He was to have returned here on the first of August; but he never made his appearance until the evening of the third, when he stated that he had gone down with a friend to the North, and that he had come

back from Derry that day. I asked him who his friend was? and he said an officer who was going to be married to Grey's sister. I knew Grey's sister was engaged to an officer, and so I never thought of disbelieving his story at the time, though I have since had reason to think he did not go to Derry at all, but only to Carlingford, in company with some not very desirable acquaintances."

"Go on," interrupted Maxwell. "It is the last part of the story I want to hear. What makes you think Arthur——"

"Is the culprit? I think so—because I found the notes secreted in his bedroom. I noticed something strange about him ever since his return, and determined to watch his movements. I remarked that he was perpetually making excuses to leave the library; that he was always going up-stairs; that——"

"Go on!" entreated Maxwell. "I do not want to know what you noticed; I want to know what you found."

"I found there was a short piece of board loose in his room, and that these notes were under it—or, rather, not under it, but pushed far away to

one side below the sound boards. I should never have guessed it but for his own over-anxiety. He could not rest away from the packet; he was always fancying somebody had discovered it."

Maxwell tried hard to keep his hands off the man who had dogged and watched and trapped his son; and who now sat and told him—not without a certain subdued triumph—how his sagacity had been rewarded—his trouble repaid. He dug his nails into his flesh, and looked at his clenched fists, with the dark look of his wicked youth gathering deeper and deeper about his eyes.

"Go on!" he repeated; and Mr. Blosse went on.

"I had heard of the robbery," he said; "I had listened to the story without any great interest, as one does listen to such things, unless there is some circumstance of special importance connected with them; but when I saw the notes I taxed Arthur with the theft, and he confessed all. How Mr. Kearns left the bag behind him——"

"You can stop now," Maxwell interrupted; "you have told me all I care to hear. Now listen

to me. I know exactly all you would say, and I can guess your questions without hearing one of them. First of all, the money must be sent back to this precious Drogheda Banking Company. Secondly, this boy—this Harold Drewitt—he must be cleared. He can do that for himself, I know. Mr. Gyton did leave Dublin for Galway on the first, and Harold was in his company all the afternoon, at any rate. Thirdly, you want Arthur out of your house, and you want no fuss, because you think a fuss would damage you with the parents of your other pupils. I will take Arthur away with me; and last, but not least, you desire a pecuniary acknowledgment from me—a suitable thank-offering for the silence you have maintained, and will maintain, on this subject. Is there anything which I have overlooked, Mr. Blosse?"

"Nothing. You are thoughtfulness itself," was the reply.

"Now, you can go back to your house and leave me here for half an hour," said Maxwell; "at the end of that time I shall want to see Arthur."

"But, Mr. Drewitt——"

"I know my own business, sir, and shall transact it after my own fashion," interrupted the owner

of Kincorth, and he followed the retreating figure with his eyes as it grew less and less in the distance—followed it till it was mixed up among other figures, and lost to view; then Maxwell himself descended slowly to the shore, and walking along the beach, which was bare and dry, the tide being out, he kicked the pebbles before him just as he had done so many years previously when he lounged home to Kincorth by the edge of Duranmore Bay.

He had been worsted, and a man like Maxwell Drewitt does not bear such an indignity patiently. He had longed to kick Mr. Blosse—to taunt him—to dare him—to defy him; but he was afraid. Mr. Blosse could transport the boy. He had father and son in his power, and he only refrained from using that power because he thought it might injure his reputation as an instructor of the sons of the "nobility and gentry" if it were known a felon had come out of such an unexceptionable establishment.

"He has the ball," reflected Maxwell, "and can make what terms he chooses, damn him!" and at this point Mr. Drewitt lit a fresh cigar, and walked on more slowly and leisurely than ever.

He was thinking—thinking what to do with Arthur. "I will take him to England," he decided. "I will put him under the care of some good clergyman, if there is such a *rara avis* to be found. I will try to reform him, for he is mine, and he is all I have."

Oh! lonely and desolate, poor and unregarded. There was something about the departure of that pair—of that father and son, from under his roof which touched even Mr. Blosse.

"You may depend upon me, Mr. Drewitt, you may, indeed," were his parting words, and he spoke them with a certain warmth of manner upon which Maxwell's reply fell like ice.

"I do not doubt it, Mr. Blosse, for you know it will be to your interest to remain true to me," and having uttered this pleasant speech, Maxwell turned his back on Mr. Blosse, and telling the car-driver to take them leisurely to Kingston, he and Arthur left Bray behind them.

Maxwell did not breathe freely until they reached Holyhead, and were speeding along through the darkness to Chester. He had never reproached his son—never spoken to him, in fact, on the subject, and he did not mean to do so till they were

safe in London. The notes were in his possession; but he could do nothing with them for the present.

Harold was still a prisoner, and "he must remain a prisoner unless Mr. Gyton can prove a satisfactory alibi," thought Maxwell. "After all, he is out of harm's way where he is, which is more than could be said if he were at large." And so far Maxwell was right, for Harold had nothing to do the whole day long except form good resolutions, and vow, and declare, and swear he would turn over a new leaf when once he got out of his present scrape.

He had been up again before the magistrate, but his solicitor had procured another remand. Mr. Gyton was in the south of France with his father, but he would return to England immediately. Mr. Pryor pledged himself to that, and in order to make assurance doubly sure, started off in search of his nephew. Brian grew dreadfully anxious as day after day passed over and still brought no tidings of Mr. Gyton's movements. He began to feel on how slight a thread Harold's chance of escape was hanging. If anything happened to Frank Gyton—if he were killed in a railway accident—if he caught a fever and died—

if he could not swear to the date—if, like Mrs. Drewitt, Geraldine, and Harold's employers, he had attached no definite memory to the day, or the hour, or the date, why, then Harold would be convicted; without doubt he would be convicted.

"And he never could live out his sentence," thought Brian, in despair, "and it would kill my mother; her hair is getting quite white with this suspense, and that certainly would kill her."

He was making some observation of the kind to the solicitor who had undertaken Harold's defence, when a telegram arrived from Mr. Gyton.

"Am in London," ran the message; "shall be in Dublin to-morrow morning."

"I hope he will," said the lawyer; "for your brother, remember, is to be brought up again on Thursday, and nothing can save him but a miracle or an alibi."

Which speech sounded anything rather than consolatory, under the circumstances.

CHAPTER II.

HEARING IS NOT BELIEVING.

THURSDAY arrived, and Harold Drewitt was again brought up on remand before the magistrate.

He had been taken into custody on the 15th of August, and it was now the middle of September; and as he came into court, two or three people remarked that the air had not seemed to agree with him—that he evidently wanted a change. "Which he is not likely to get to-day," observed one policeman.

"His witness is here, though, I am told," was the reply.

"I don't care if fifty witnesses were here, they could not bring him out clear," answered the other, oracularly; and, indeed, this was the general feeling in the court. Everybody thought

Harold had made a mistake in not pleading guilty, and begging for mercy, as it was his first offence, and the temptation had been great.

In one way the policeman was right. Mr. Gyton could clear him in law, but Mr. Gyton could never wash him white in the estimation of the public; and poor Harold appeared to feel this, as he looked round the court, and saw every eye fastened on him, not compassionately, but curiously.

He never seemed to have courage except when he glanced at Brian, who had been faithful to him through all—faithful, as he had promised his father, on his death-bed, that he would be to Harold.

There was the magistrate, severe and incredulous; there were some of the directors of the Dundalk and Drogheda Banking Company, eager for revenge; there was Mr. Jeremiah Kearns; there were all the witnesses, mentally checking off the depositions as they were read aloud, and thinking how impossible it was any man living could prove an alibi in the face of such overwhelming evidence.

One or two fresh witnesses had been procured

by the bank from impossible regions of the earth: the lady who got into the carriage at Drogheda; the passengers who had travelled from Balbriggan to Malahide;—all were there to swear to Harold's identity with the thief.

The lady was the only person who hesitated about the matter. She could not swear to the prisoner being her fellow-passenger. "He was very like him; but——"

"But what, my dear madam?" suggested the solicitor for the prosecution; and the court waited for her reply, while the lady still hesitated.

"Pray tell us in what respect the prisoner is unlike?" suggested the magistrate, insinuatingly; for the lady was pretty, and his worship had eyes in his head.

There was a profound silence in the court, while the witness turned and looked again at Harold.

Very imploringly he lifted his eyes to hers, and perhaps that settled the matter.

"I cannot swear to the prisoner being the young gentleman with whom I travelled from Drogheda. He is very like—but——"

"Pray proceed, we are all attention;" and the

solicitor for the prosecution struck an attitude while he waited for the rest of the sentence.

"The young gentleman I travelled with had a slight suspicion of a moustache and beard coming," said the lady, desperately, "and——"

A roar of laughter, in which the magistrate himself could not help joining, drowned the remainder of her words.

"You mean, I conclude, that the prisoner's hirsute appendages have not as yet made their appearance," suggested the magistrate.

"He has likely been hungry where he was, and ate them off" remarked some one in the rear.

"If I hear any more indecent interruptions," said his worship, "I will order the court to be cleared."

"If ye'd have it cleaned," observed the same voice; whereupon the police made a dive into the crowd, and seizing an old woman and a boy, hustled them outside the door.

Meantime the solicitor for the prosecution was asking the witness, "if she did not think it possible she was mistaken—that she had been thinking of some one else?"

Upon which the lady got cross and said, "She

was not mistaken, and that she was not thinking of any one else;" and as nothing more could be made of her, she was ordered to stand down.

The solicitor for the defence, when it came to his turn, said very little about the business—as little as he could help. He remarked, that it was clearly a case of mistaken identity, and observed that the prisoner had been in Dublin at the very hour when the robbery was said to have been committed. In support of which he produced Mr. Francis Gyton, whose appearance made an impression both on the magistrate and the court generally.

Mr. Francis Gyton being sworn, deposed, that he was a son of Mr. Gyton, of the firm of Gyton, Lark, Munday, Hatfield, & Co., Austinfriars, London.

"He has got fathers enough," remarked the former speaker from among the crowd, and the police made a fresh dive, and this time carried off in triumph a woman who had an infant in her arms.

Mr. Gyton proceeded—Knew the prisoner Harold Drewitt very well indeed; called at his mother's house, and subsequently at the office of his employers, on the first of August last. Remembered

the day, because he left London on the evening of the thirty-first of July, by the twenty-five minutes past eight express, and crossed to Kingston by the night mail-packet. Was only the one day in Dublin. Left the very evening of his arrival for Galway. Slept in Galway at the Railway Hotel, and proceeded the next day to Durrow Park, near Duranmore, the residence of his uncle, Mr. Henry Pryor. The prisoner dined with him and accompanied him to the railway station.

Cross-examined.—Was certain he did not stop the night at Chester. He had a glass of very bad sherry there, and returned to the compartment he occupied immediately. Was not left behind. Begged the solicitor for the prosecution would recollect to whom he was speaking. Had not the slightest idea whether it was the Ulster, Munster, Leinster, or Connaught, he came over in. If he, the solicitor, sent down to Kingston, very probably he could find which of those steam-vessels arrived at Kingston from Holyhead on the morning of the first of August.

Knew they had a good passage. Could not possibly be mistaken as to Harold's identity. Had been acquainted with him too long for that. Was

certain he only remained in Dublin one day. Did he, the lawyer, think he should forget his own name next? Left Broadstone by the half-past seven train. There was one gentleman in the compartment with him. Arrived in Galway about twelve. Had some cold beef; remembered it, because he had never seen such a joint before, or since; and a glass of brandy and water. Slept at the Railway Hotel. Could not recollect the number of his room; but knew it had three windows in it, and that all of them would open. Had never in any other house in Ireland seen a window that would open, or a door that would shut. Was not in love with Ireland. The solicitor for the prosecution was perfectly correct in that supposition; but came often to Ireland to see his uncle. Had frequently been told it was a fine country, but could not say of his own knowledge that such was the fact.

Admitted that he liked English customs best. Did not admire Irish peculiarities when they carried people to the length of shooting landlords, and locking up an innocent boy for a month, on suspicion of his having stolen a black bag from a bank clerk. Would swear fifty times, if the solicitor wished it, that the prisoner could not have been at

Drogheda, because he was at Broadstone; and he, Mr. Gyton, supposed that even an Irishman was unable to appear in two places at once. Had kept none of his hotel bills; always tore up the rubbish the moment he was outside the door; did not consider that a proof of English extravagance, and could not see, if it were, that it had anything to do with the matter in hand. Did not know whether the prisoner led a respectable life or not, and was at a loss to understand what his life signified to anybody except Mr. Harold Drewitt, and Mr. Harold Drewitt's friends. Had come back from France solely for the purpose of giving evidence in this case; would have come from Jericho for that matter. Was quite certain prisoner had dined with and accompanied him to the Broadstone Station. Did not think it at all singular that he could remember the name of a station while he forgot the name of a boat. Most probably he had never indeed heard the name of the steamer. Was positive about the date. How much oftener was the solicitor going to ask him that question?

Henry Pryor, sworn, stated that his nephew, the last witness, arrived at his house on the second of August, and told him he had parted with Harold

Drewitt at the Broadstone Terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway on the preceding evening. His nephew informed him (Mr. Pryor) that he had asked Harold to come down to Connemara, and that the boy would endeavour to get permission to do so. Mr. Gyton was suddenly summoned back to London, in consequence of the dangerous illness of his father, with whom he subsequently proceeded abroad, and consequently, when Harold Drewitt did arrive at Durrow, Mr. Gyton had left that place. Was certain his nephew arrived in Connemara on the second, and that he said he had not slept in Dublin, but in Galway. He had known Harold Drewitt for two years, and believed him to be quite incapable of the crime laid to his charge.

After which evidence, the solicitor for the defence intimated that he did not purpose calling any other witness. It was, as he stated in the commencement, a clear case of mistaken identity. From the first his client had said he never travelled by the Belfast Junction, or Dublin and Drogheda Railway, in his life, and an alibi had now been unmistakably proved.

After a good deal of hesitation, his worship fell into this view, and having remarked that Mr. Gyton's

evidence was irreconcilable with the assumption of the prisoner's guilt, and that it appeared to be a most singular case of mistaken identity, he said that the prisoner must be discharged.

There was, however, something in the magistrate's manner which seemed to imply "not guilty, but don't do it again;" for he assured Harold he had had a very narrow escape, advised him for the future to lead a more regular life, and began a lecture which the prisoner cut short by saying—

"I did not steal those notes, I know nothing about them, who stole them, or whether they ever were stolen. I never was at Drogheda in my life, nor at Dundalk either. I never, to my recollection, entered Mr. Brinny's shop before the time I went in there for those cigars, and if ever I chance to meet the person who appears to be so like me, I will take the value out of his bones for what he has made me suffer during the past month."

This indiscretion on the part of Harold was a perfect godsend to the magistrate, who told him such language was highly improper, remarked that he did not seem duly grateful for his escape, and finally dismissed him with a caution.

Then the next case was called on, and Harold, to quote the newspaper reports, left the court with his friends.

There is, perhaps, no way in which a person can be acquitted which is so eminently unpleasant as for an acquaintance to come forward and swear that on such a day, and at such an hour, the accused was with him in such a place.

Of course it is better to get off in this way rather than not at all; but an alibi always sounds too like a pretext to be perfectly satisfactory to the public; while the released prisoner (if he be innocent) invariably leaves the court with the comfortable idea either that a score of people have been in league against him, or else that there is some blackguard walking about the world wearing his face, assuming his gait, speaking with his voice, who may be committing fifty crimes that will, in due time, be fathered on him.

Harold Drewitt was not, however, old enough to comprehend all that a man would have felt, had a man stood in the boy's shoes. He knew he had got off, and it was impossible that he should understand he had escaped being committed for trial by the merest shave of the wheel of accident.

Had he been with any of his ordinary companions during the afternoon in question, there can be no doubt but that the magistrate would have pooh-poohed the evidence in the prisoner's favour, while probably the witnesses for the defence might have got so worried and tormented as to narrowly escape being committed for perjury.

Mr. Gyton and Mr. Pryor were not, however, people whose testimony could be treated with disrespect. They might be mistaken. In his heart the magistrate thought they were; but still he had no choice but to act on their evidence and allow Harold to leave the court with his friends; while many people remarked—that the young fellow had been born under a lucky planet, and that if he had been a poor boy he would have been transported.

"He would, as sure as God made little apples," observed one man, indignantly elbowing his way out of the crowd; "for it's meself knows the dacent chap that was hung on half the ividence they brought against this one. If he didn't stole that money I'd be very glad to know who did."

That was the general feeling throughout Dublin; but Harold knew nothing about the general feel-

ing, and only remembering that he was free once more, returned home on a car laughing and amusing himself as usual.

He mimicked the magistrate; he mimicked the witnesses; he mimicked the policeman, and went rollicking about the house in the wildest spirits imaginable.

He was as thin as a whipping-post and as pale as a corpse; but he insisted that he was not ill, that his mother should make herself happy about him.

"I am not ill," he said; "not a bit ill; all I want is something to eat and to get out into the fresh air. We shall have many a walk before the fine weather is quite gone. There is a fortnight still left of September. Am I to go back to the office or not?" he added, looking towards Brian, who said—

"Your place has been filled up."

"Has it? A good job too. There was not one of them came to speak a word for me, and none of the fellows sent me a line or a message, though they must have known I did not do it—mustn't they, mother?"

"Yes, Harold."

"We will go down for a day to Bray, and take a car on to the Dargle, shall we, mother? I should like that. I'd like to see the purple bloom of the heather if it's not quite gone off, and I love the sea down there."

"May we go with you?" asked Mr. Pryor, and Mr. Gyton at once followed suit, and voted that it would be nice for them to make up several little parties and go wherever Harold chose. There was an indescribable tenderness in the manner of all towards the boy who had been, as they knew, so hardly done by, and who presently insisted on going as far as Sackville Street, "Just to be sure I am free," he laughed.

As Brian had business to attend to, and Mr. Gyton appeared a little loth to leave Geraldine, Mr. Pryor offered to accompany Harold; and the pair accordingly sallied forth and walked into Dublin, where the youth at every turn met some one he knew, some one he paused involuntarily to speak with.

But no one voluntarily spoke to him: a cold bow; a nod; a how-d'ye-do; a reluctant shake hands. Harold could not understand it, and at last appealed to Mr. Pryor.

"Am I not innocent? It looks almost as though they thought me guilty, does not it?" and he drew closer to his companion, who told him—

"Not to trouble himself about it; that they would learn better in time."

"I think," remarked Harold, after another old acquaintance had passed without taking the slightest notice of his salutation, "I think it is nearly time for us to go home; and, accordingly, they turned and went back over Carlisle Bridge, and along Westmoreland Street, and past College Green, and down Nassau Street, and so on to the suburb where Mrs. Drewitt resided. As they walked along Merrion Square a disreputable-looking fellow came up and, accosting Harold, shook him so heartily by the hand as to threaten dislocation of his wrist.

"Glad to see you out," he said; "thought at one time you were in Queer Street for life: when will you be round our way?"

"I don't know," answered Harold, nervously feeling Mr. Pryor touch his arm warningly. "I am not very well—that is, I have friends—that is, I am going out of town."

"Well, it's about the best thing you can do

till the talk has blown over. It is a wicked world, and living's hard work. Good-bye."

"Who is that man, Harold?" Mr. Pryor asked a little sternly, and his tone at once put Harold's bristles up.

"He was a very respectable person—very indeed; but had been unfortunate in business. His name was Grinnell, and he lived some place up near Mountjoy Square."

"Does he really? I should have thought some of those nice respectable streets in the neighbourhood of St. Patrick's would have been much more in his way."

Of which speech Harold refused to take any notice.

"I hope," continued Mr. Pryor, "that you do not intend keeping up your acquaintance with him; you are but just starting in life; you have been extricated with considerable difficulty from a most awkward position, and it behoves you, therefore, to be doubly careful for the future in choosing your associates."

Still Harold made no answer.

"I wish you would promise not to have anything more to do with people of that description: you

will ruin your own prospects, and break your mother's heart."

"Hang it!" interrupted Harold, "one must speak to somebody, and he is the only fellow who has said a civil word to me since I came out. You must see for yourself that the 'genteels' have cut me; don't you now?"

"If they have, do you think you will mend matters by taking up with all the riff-raff who come and shake hands with you?"

"You need not call them names if they are not gentlemen," suggested Harold.

"I think I, or any one else who styled the person from whom we have just parted an honest man would be calling him very much out of his name."

"I suppose I am not good enough for you, then?" said Harold, pausing.

"Nonsense, boy. I want to save you from the consequences of your own want of firmness. You believe in everybody who says a kind word to you, and the result is you have made intimates and associates of people with whom you ought never to have exchanged a word. Do you not remember what the police stated about the character of your companions—swindlers, betting-men, drunkards,

profligates, of every description? If your mother had only heard the one-half we have heard about you, Harold, she would be more anxious about you than she is."

"I wonder you are not ashamed to be seen out walking with me," said the boy. "I am sure I am not fit company for a rich swell like you. Had not you better take the other side of the street?" added Harold, who was by this time worked up to a pitch of passionate fury. "We may meet somebody else who will come between the wind and your nobility. Go on; I will follow, if you like; it cannot be pleasant for you to feel that you are out walking with—with—a blackguard and a thief!"

"Don't be an idiot, Harold;" and Mr. Pryor laid a hand on the boy's shoulder, and led him, or, rather, pushed him, on towards home.

"I'm not an idiot," said Harold. "I know you all think I am, and that I do not understand anything—that I am a fool; but I am as wise as Brian, though I may not be such an old-fashioned sneak; and I will speak to whom I like, and go with whom I like, and visit whom I like, without consulting anybody."

"You are resolved to be independent, at any rate," observed Mr. Pryor.

"Yes, I am. I mean to stick by the friends who stick by me——"

"Would you think me impertinent if I ventured to remind you, I and my nephew have tried to be your friends?" said the barrister.

"I know you have; and I know why, too; because Maxwell told me something long ago. It is not because you like me, it isn't. Nobody likes me; and now you are going to set my mother against me, and tell her every little thing I have ever done."

Having completed which dreadful picture, Harold stopped again in the very middle of the pavement, and seemed disposed to have a good cry on the spot.

There was a car passing at the moment, which Mr. Pryor hailed. "You are tired, Harold," he said; "you have tried your strength too much. Jump up, and let us drive home."

When they reached home, Harold went off to bed; but whether because he was sick, or whether he was sulky, Mr. Pryor could not decide.

Next day, however, he saw clearly that the young

gentleman's temper was greatly damaged; for he insisted, against the advice of every one of his family, on going to his late employers, and asking why they had filled up his berth.

"I wish you would not do anything so foolish," Brian remarked.

"I am not a child," was the reply; "and I mean to see to my own business for myself. I won't be kept in the dark by anybody."

And accordingly he went.

It was the best thing that could have happened to a youth of Harold's peculiar disposition, to be able to hear for himself what the world said of him.

He had been so pampered and spoiled at home, that he was never likely to learn the truth there. Strangers, however, did not stand on so much ceremony, and when Harold grew impudent, gave him quite as good as he brought.

"I know you have got off," said one of his late employers; "and I know how you have got off, also—by an alibi; for which I would not give that!" and he threw a scrap of waste paper on the floor. "Of course, I am sure Mr. Gyton would not have said what he did unless he fully

believed it to be the truth; but he was mistaken, that is all; and a very lucky mistake it turned out for you. I really wonder at your assurance in coming here at all. As for taking you back, I am only too glad to be rid of you; there is not another house in Dublin who would have kept so idle, useless, and disreputable a young vagabond for a week."

Harold walked out of the inner office, and as he passed through the outer looked defiantly at the clerks he had once been intimate with: one or two nodded; but none came forward to shake hands —to say they were pleased at his escape.

He felt tired, but he had no heart to go home; he had taken his own way, and his own way not having proved a pleasant one, he did not like to go back and confess to such a disappointment: accordingly he went on—on along the North Wall, where his respectable friend of the preceding evening dropped upon him, and proposed that they should go out for a drive together: "Round by the strawberry-beds, and on as far as Lucan."

Harold jumped at the idea. "And we can have some dinner together, and then spend the evening at Birdley's; there are to be a lot of fellows there.

What do you say? will 'the old folks at home,' be singing all the evening, 'Willie, we have missed you?'"

"No," answered Harold; "I'm your man." And while Mrs. Drewitt was marvelling what in the world could have become of her boy, he was rattling through the Dublin streets, talking and laughing and joking, as though he had never been in any trouble, as though he had never been a prisoner in his life.

Before evening came he was pretty well exhausted, but still his companion insisted on taking him to Birdley's, where he was greeted by the assembled guests with great enthusiasm; his health being drunk with all the honours.

"Now tell us how you did it?" exclaimed one. "How many of the flimsies did you manage to get off?" asked another.

"I suppose you have made a bonfire of the rest; it would be no go trying to pass them now," said a third.

"You must have made a tidy haul of it though, altogether," observed one unwholesome-looking young man.

"And how did you contrive to hoodwink those

respectable friends of yours, for I suppose they would have been above sharing the swag."

"Tell us all about it?" repeated the first speaker. "Silence now, gentlemen, if you please. Mr. Harold Drewitt rises to address the meeting."

"I want to know something," cried Harold, who was indeed on his legs. "Do you really think I stole those notes?"

"Draw it mild," suggested the young man above referred to; who looked very much as though he had been buried and dug up again. "Stole is such a confoundedly ugly way of putting it."

"Do you believe then I ever was at Drogheda? Do you think I ever saw that money? Do you imagine that all I said was lies?"

"Well, very few people looked upon it as the truth," was the reply.

"You consider me a thief, then, in plain words?"

"Oh! no, nothing of the kind; you merely annexed the contents of that carpet-bag——"

"I did not—I did not," Harold vehemently interrupted. "I know no more who took that money than you do. (Here the auditors winked at one another.) If I never should speak another

word, I am as innocent in this matter as any man among you."

"Well, then, who the devil is guilty?" asked the chairman; "for no person in his senses can suppose all those witnesses were in collusion against you. It must have been you or your twin brother, if you have one."

"If you look closely at his face, it must strike you as too old, too second-hand, if I may use the expression, to have served only one body," said Mr. Grinnell. "Rely upon it there's another trunk somewhere that borrows that face and goes out with it at nights while this good child is sleeping it its bed."

"Gentlemen," began Harold.

"We are all attention."

"I wish you would believe me."

"Lord help the boy, we are so simple we could be made believe anything," said his neighbour.

"I never saw that money. I never changed one of those notes. Everybody is against me, though I am innocent—innocent;" and Harold's voice began to shake a little and his lips to tremble.

"Really this is becoming affecting," remarked

the corpse-like young gentleman, addressing Mr. Grinnell.

"Allow me to perform a parent's part," said the chairman, offering Harold a handkerchief.

But Harold's temper was now up: he pitched the handkerchief back at the speaker; he threw off his coat, and declaring he would fight the matter out, dared any one to say he was a liar, and requested the company generally to "come on!"

"Now, now," said Mr. Grinnell; "now, now," and he walked round the table, and picked up Harold's coat, and begged him to put it on, and to sit down and take things peaceably.

"How can I take things peaceably when you are all against me—all?" asked Harold, looking first at one of his tormentors and then at another "Are you cowards, that none of you will come on, when I ask you? Will you not even let me fight for my good name? will you not——"

"Catch him, some of you," cried the chairman, and involuntarily every man sprang to his feet, and stretched out his arms towards the boy, who, stopping suddenly in his sentence, reeled back a few paces, and then fell into the chair he had pushed away from him.

"Send for a doctor," said one.

"Give him some punch."

"He's had too much already."

"No, he hasn't," said Grinnell, "he has scarcely tasted a drop."

"Get him some water."

"Stand back, stand back," entreated Grinnell, "and open the windows, some of you; it is not a common faint though, he's quite gone," and he wiped the perspiration from Harold's face, and put the hair back off his forehead, and took the clammy hands in his and chafed them gently.

"I will take him home," he said, when Harold recovered a little. "Tell the waiter to call a car. Birdley will lend me something warm to wrap round him. Are you able to walk now, do you think?" he continued, addressing Harold, "or shall I carry you? That is right; take hold of my arm; don't be afraid of leaning. Now come with me."

"Good-night, gentlemen," Harold said, turning round and addressing the group that were looking after him. "Likely I shall never see any of you again; but, whether you believe it or not, I am innocent of what you think."

"He looks to me," remarked the chairman after

he had left the room, "as though he were going precious fast to that place where it's best known what he is. It is a pity, too, for he is a plucky lad;" and there ensued a great silence, during which every man present was employed wondering whether it were indeed within the bounds of possibility that Harold had been mistaken for some one else, who might be thinking at that very moment how deucedly lucky it was for him that he had escaped scot free.

CHAPTER III.

CALLED HOME.

THE September wind blew cold and keen as Mr. Grinnell and Harold drove along the quays to Carlisle Bridge, and the man that had so strongly excited Mr. Pryor's disapproval drew the borrowed rug closer round the boy, who shivered and trembled as the blast swept by.

It was better when they entered the south side; there they were sheltered from the cutting wind, and Harold grew quieter and calmer as the car bore him nearer and nearer home. He asked Mr. Grinnell not to drive up to the door, but to set him down at the end of the street where his mother resided; and then they had a quarrel as to which should pay the man, that resulted in Harold, as usual, having it all his own way.

On one point, however, Mr. Grinnell was firm—he would not let the sick lad walk up the street alone, neither would he allow him to throw aside Birdley's rug. "I will take it back with me," he said. "I am resolved to see you safe and sound to your own door."

Which he did, and then bidding Harold a cheery "good-night," left Harold as Brian admitted him.

"Who was that came with you?" the elder brother asked.

"A friend of mine, a man who brought me home. I have been ill, Brian—I have indeed," and Harold dropped into a chair and put out his white thin hand deprecatingly towards his brother.

"I am going to be good," he said. "I am. If you all will only do what I ask you, I will never get drunk again. I will try to be a credit to everybody belonging to me yet. It is not too late, I think, is it?" and with a gesture which was unspeakably touching, he put Brian's hand on the table, and laid his cheek upon it.

Brian had persuaded his mother and Geraldine to go to bed. The servant, however, was still up, and now stood in the doorway. She came to ask if anything more were needed; but seeing Harold's

head bent down and his brother leaning over him, she remained silent.

Brian saw her and whispered the one word "Doctor."

In a moment, Mary was running down the street, and late though the hour was, returned in five minutes with a surgeon.

"My brother is not very well," said Brian, after the first greetings were over. "Can you suggest any little thing that will set him to rights?"

"I would rather not see a doctor. I do not want any medicine," remarked Harold, lifting his head, and looking with his great dark eyes straight in the face of the surgeon who was feeling his pulse, and counting its beats with the greatest apparent indifference. "I am quite well," he went on, pettishly, trying to wrench away his wrist; and then he dropped his face again on Brian's hand, and his brother knew it was to hide the hot tears, that were falling thick and fast as rain.

"Hysterical," said the doctor, calmly; and Harold gave Brian a push, as a hint that he should contradict the medical statement.

"His strength has been greatly tried lately, as most probably you know," answered the elder

brother; and his low, full voice had a great virtue of quietness in it. "He has suffered much, both mentally and bodily; but we hope rest and change may do wonders for him. Don't we, Harold?"

The boy made no reply, but he pressed his lips on Brian's hand.

"Is this the young gentleman, then, who was charged with a crime that some one else committed?" asked the surgeon; and for those words Harold turned round and thanked him.

"Nobody would believe me, sir," he said. "Nobody, that is, out of my own home. But I did not do it. I did not, indeed."

"That I am sure you did not!" answered the surgeon, heartily; and immediately he and Harold became good friends; and the boy, pushing back the mass of black hair that had fallen forward over his face, answered all the doctor's questions, and told all his symptoms, so far as he knew them himself.

"It is the nights I dread," he finished. "If you could only give me something to prevent my being so frightened. It is horrible to be all alone

in the dark, like that;" and he clutched Brian's hand, and held it fast while he spoke.

"Why did you never tell any one of these attacks before?" asked Brian.

"I told Mr. Pryor. The first of them I ever had at night was the time I was staying at Durrow; and he tipped me a five-pound note, and made me promise him to go to some of the great guns here, and ask them about it; and I meant to go, only, you know, they took me up the very day I came back—they did."

"Poor lad!" said the surgeon, compassionately.

"I was a poor lad, I think," answered Harold. "There's nobody ever can know what it was—to be like what I have been to-night, in that horrid place. Another week of it would have killed me; I am sure it would."

"Well, we must try to set you up again now," observed the surgeon, cheerfully. "If your servant can come with me," he added, addressing Brian, "I will send back some medicine with her, and see your brother early to-morrow morning;" and he stretched out his hand, which the two youths shook gratefully, and departed.

"You won't leave me to-night, Brian, will you?"

pleaded Harold; and Brian was just saying that he would not, when Mrs. Drewitt, who had got up and dressed herself at the sound of a strange voice, came down-stairs, asking what was the matter.

"I did not feel up to the mark," Harold answered; "and that obstinate Brian must needs go disturb the whole neighbourhood by fetching a doctor to see me. What a shame it is to have roused you up! but now that you are here, I want to ask you a favour. I want you and Brian to do something for me."

"What is it, dear?" She was sitting on a chair, drawn close up to his; her arms were about him, and his head was resting on her breast.

"I want to go away. I want you to leave Dublin, and take me where I shall not be known—where I shall not be called a thief and a liar at every turn."

"Who dares call you either the one or the other?" and Brian's hand clenched, and his mouth was drawn tight as he asked the question.

Harold laughed out.

> "Who killed Kildare? who dared Kildare to kill?—
> I killed Kildare, and dare kill whom I will,"

he repeated. "He would go out and fight for me,

I do believe," he said, turning to his mother; "but he would have to fight all Dublin if he took up that quarrel. I have found out to-day," Harold went on, as he kept curling and uncurling the broad strings of the widow's cap that fitted so closely to Mrs. Drewitt's face, "that there is no place like home, after all, and that there are no people like our own people, when they are true to us."

"Come up to bed, Harold," interposed Brian, who dreaded another fit of weeping. "Come along;" and he lifted his brother off his chair.

"Wait a moment," entreated Harold, standing with his arm round Brian's neck, and Brian's arm supporting him. "Wait a moment; will you do what I say? Will you leave Dublin?"

Mrs. Drewitt's glance wandered for a moment round the room. It was not large; it was not well furnished; but it had been a shelter, and it had seemed like home. For the instant it appeared hard to have to turn out once more into the world; to be in middle age a wanderer on the face of the earth; but the feeling only lasted for a moment; then she said—

"I will do whatever may be best for my children,

and the child that has most need of me I must consider first."

The last few words were addressed to Brian, who answered—

"Harold has most need of you, mother. Do what he asks. Leaving Ireland may be the making of him yet."

"Do you wish to leave Ireland, Harold?" Mrs. Drewitt inquired, and the boy nodded.

"I should like to go to London," he said; "I want to be lost; I want to be able to be a good boy. I am tired and sick of being bad and foolish."

"Then God forbid we should keep you in the way of temptation!" exclaimed Brian: "but now come to bed; if you are to travel to London you must make haste and get strong."

"Oh! I shall be all right enough," answered the lad as he crawled up the staircase, with Brian's arm still encircling him, with his right hand still twined round Brian's neck.

And thus it came to pass that, instead of going to the Dargle, or to the Seven Churches, or to the meeting of the waters, or any of the lovely places to which Mr. Gyton had planned little excursions,

the Drewitts set about packing up their effects forthwith and removing to London.

"You can do as you please about it, of course," said the surgeon to Brian; "but——"

"It is his fancy," the elder brother answered; "and I would not baulk it for any consideration. And do not tell my mother, Mr. Ross; she will find it out for herself in time. I know what you mean. I have been afraid of it from the first."

And there was another person who knew also; upon whom the feeling that he was dying came slowly but surely; who day by day clung to his mother with a more despairing attachment, with a more passionate love.

After they removed to London he and she were never separate. In the dull winter days he sat at the windows of their lodgings, looking out on the constantly-changing panorama that was passing below. For the sake of her boy, Mrs. Drewitt had rented apartments in a house that commanded the view of a crowded thoroughfare; and it was Harold's delight to sit from noon to dusk, and from dusk to nightfall, watching the people passing and repassing, the endless conveyances, the lights, the bustle, the noise, the excitement.

Hand clasped in hand, mother and son spent the days thus together. It was a fearful winter, that of 1854-5, but Harold lived through it. The spring of 1855 was late, and the season ungenial; but Harold lived to smell the violets which Geraldine bought for him, and to see the primrose-roots hawked in baskets about the streets.

It was a lovely summer, and Harold lived to take many a drive and many a walk through the great Babylon. He loved the parks—he liked to go where there were hundreds and hundreds of people, and not a face he knew among them save one, his mother's; while she—it was impossible for her not to know that to Harold's life there could be but one sequel—an early death: and when at last, in the September following their arrival in London, the heart that had once throbbed so high with youth and hope and courage was cold and quiet, Mrs. Drewitt, alone with her dead, fell on her knees and thanked God that her boy—her frail, erring, unfortunate boy—belonged at last solely to Him and her.

She made no mourning for her child, she raised no cry of grievous lamentation, of un-

utterable woe, but she lay through the night thinking of how he had come home at last—home to the one sure shelter to die in peace. The touch of his hand seemed never to depart from her; she could not forget how day after day he had pillowed his head on her bosom; she could not shut her ears to the "mother—mother" that he kept repeating towards the last if she left his side for a moment.

"God has been very good to me, Brian," she said. "He gave my boy back to me before he died, and I am content."

With some difficulty Brian at last found a resting-place for Harold: not in one of the great cemeteries, but in a quiet churchyard in one of the northern suburbs, where the evening sun falls aslant over the graves, where great trees throw a pleasant shade across the grass, where the grey church-tower flings its shadow over the tombs, where the bells ring out Sunday after Sunday, where there is quiet without loneliness, rest without desertion.

There Brian laid his brother down to sleep, himself the solitary mourner.

Mr. Pryor and Mr. Gyton were both out of

town; and in the vast city Brian Drewitt had no other friend.

As he left the grave, his thoughts went back to another funeral, at which he had been chief mourner likewise: where, under the shadow of the mountains, within sound of the sea, he had seen the mortal remains of his father placed in the vault of the Drewitts.

He would have felt better satisfied had Harold slept there likewise. He would have liked a train of mourners, and a procession such as had wound down the avenue at Kincorth, and under the trees, and round the bay, and over Duranmore Hill, and down into the hollow.

Each man has his special weakness, and this was Brian's. He had never felt so fully that they were Drewitts of Kincorth no longer, as when he followed his brother to the grave alone.

What did the words graven on his headstone, "Harold Drewitt," imply to the men and the women who passed through that churchyard Sunday after Sunday? Nothing. They only served to show that there a stranger had laid him down to rest.

What guess could they make about how the nineteen years of his young life had been spent? What could they know of his story—his errors—his repentance—his wrongs?

But as though it had been all contained in a single page, Brian read the tale which was now finished over again—over and over again.

He could see the boy riding round and round the meadows; he could see the proud glances which both father and mother directed towards their youngest born; he could see the daring imp taking his leaps, bearing his tosses, laughing advice to scorn, and mocking at all grave counsels. He could see him walking about with Maxwell; looking defiantly across the dinner-table, at the Headlands, at his more prudent brother, and then draining off his bumper out of mere bravado. He thought of him that night at Regan's: he saw him disappear through the darkness on Madcap; he remembered his life in Dublin, and the great trial which had, so far as any human being could see, saved his soul, while it destroyed his life; and then—then there came the days when Harold was tractable as a child—when he clung to his mother—when he turned back home to die.

The short story was finished—the tale told—the book closed in this world for ever.

It was with the life of Harold Drewitt, "as it is with a ship that passeth over the waves of the sea, which, when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves; or, as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of the way to be found; or, as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again." He had "passed away like a shadow, or as a post that hasteth by."

Maxwell Drewitt had been right. It was a young body that Brian left, with an exceeding bitter and sorrowful heart, to sleep in the grave until the Judgment-day.

CHAPTER IV.

GERALDINE IS SATISFIED.

In the lives of all men there come long pauses, when the river of existence seems to flow on without a ripple, when day succeeds to day without any event of sufficient importance to be set down and chronicled occurring in the even course of their experience.

Such a time was the year following Harold's death to Brian Drewitt. Though some changes had taken place, they had come about so naturally that they scarcely seemed changes to him. All perhaps he noticed specially or cared for particularly was, that he found it would take him a long time to grow rich, and that during that time he was separated from revenge and Maxwell and Kincorth.

Had he forgotten Kincorth, do you imagine? Had trouble driven all thoughts of vengeance out of his head? Had struggling with the world not tamed him, experience not subdued him, time not softened him? No, my reader. The object he had planned to work for in Connemara he was working for still, and though the end seemed no nearer of attainment, but further off than ever, yet Brian Drewitt never withdrew his eyes from it, but kept that distant goal in view by day and night, in solitude and when he was mixing among his fellows.

Long ago, I said a person had but to look in Brian Drewitt's face to know that he could wait through years. He was waiting through years now for the end.

He had been very fortunate in business; fortunate, that is, considering his training and the age at which he made his start in the world; but still Brian felt dissatisfied.

It is not easy to be content with pounds when you have been calculating thousands; it is difficult to work for small pay when you desire to make money *ad libitum* for the purpose of wiping out old scores; and thus, though Brian was in the receipt of a hundred and fifty pounds a year, he

worked like a galley-slave to make himself of more value to his employers, who were now not the Dublin firm in whose establishment he had made his first start in life, but the great London house of Gyton, Lark, Munday, Hatfield and Company, Austinfriars.

After his brother's death he felt that he would like to be nearer his mother than could possibly be the case if he retained his situation in Dublin.

As for asking Mrs. Drewitt and Geraldine to return there, to return to a country which was now so full of painful associations, he felt that such a request would be both foolish and unreasonable, and when Mr. Frank Gyton proposed to him that he should take his chance of the "governor's temper," at a salary of one hundred and fifty, which was an advance of fifty on the pay of the Dublin firm, Brian closed with the offer on the spot, and three months afterwards walked into the city office as corresponding and foreign clerk.

That Mr. Gyton had a temper; that Mr. Munday had a worse; that the managing clerk had a worse temper than all his principals' tempers put together, Brian was not long of finding out; but he had sense enough to find out at the same time that

if he did his work no one could find fault with him; that if he kept his time, held his tongue, did what he was told and refrained from idling, nobody would meddle with him.

Had he been gay and light-hearted, like other lads; had he been given to merriment, or to merry-making; had he been sociable and lively, like Harold, with a jeer or a joke for every one, probably he would never have made way in the good graces of Mr. Gyton; but as matters stood that gentleman took to him in due time amazingly.

Mr. Gyton, in the City, was a different man from Mr. Gyton at the West-end. At the west he did not seem to have much voice in any matter on which his son and wife chanced to entertain a decided opinion; but in the City he was an individual of many prejudices, with old-fashioned ideas; who gave himself all the airs of a millionaire; who was a martinet in Austinfriars, and who liked to see old heads set on young shoulders.

In this respect Brian suited him to a nicety. Brian might have been a thousand years of age.

"A most discreet young man," he remarked to Mr. Munday; and Mr. Munday agreed that he was,

but ventured to observe that it was a pity he chanced to be born on the wrong side of the channel.

"As for that, sir," answered Mr. Gyton, drawing himself up, and taking a pinch of snuff out of his box, without offering any to Mr. Munday, "as for that, sir, the Gytons have some Irish blood in their veins. My grandfather married the niece of an Irish Earl, and my father-in-law was Irish to the back-bone. Well trained, sir, and well bred, the Irish can run as well as the best of us."

"Then I suppose it is quite true what I hear about your son?" said Mr. Munday, a little maliciously.

"What about my son, sir?—what—what about Frank?"

"It is generally said that Mr. Drewitt has a very charming sister——"

"And if he have a dozen sisters, Mr. Munday——"

"Why, in that case, your son could have choice enough."

"Of course he could, and he can choose whom he pleases, and he can marry whom he likes, without consulting every idiot in London on the subject, I suppose."

"Certainly, Mr. Gyton, his own father not excepted, we may conclude."

And then the partners had quite a quarrel; they tried who could hit hardest, who could say the sharpest things, and went on wrangling and snarling, until Mr. Gyton, looking as red as a turkey-cock and as pompous as a beadle, remarked, that he supposed his private affairs might be regarded as separate from those of the firm; and that he wished Mr. Munday would recollect for the future that he had expressed such a wish; after which observation, which was delivered in the tone of a royal command, Mr. Gyton summoned Brian into his private office, and began catechizing him.

"How long have you been with us, Drewitt?"

"Six months, sir."

"And you like the business?"

"I like anything out of which money can be made," was the reply.

"Anything honest, I suppose, you mean."

"Anything honest and honourable," agreed Brian. "Anything that a gentleman may do, and still remain one."

"Humph! You call yourself a gentleman, then, do you?"

Brian flushed scarlet, but had sense enough to make no reply.

"There—there—don't be annoyed. I only asked for information. I wanted to know more of you. An employer ought to understand clearly the position in life of a person holding your responsible office. Let me see—how did you happen to come here?—who recommended you?—with whom were you last?"

Brian told him.

"And wasn't there something about your father cutting you out?—what was all that?"

Once again, Brian gave him the information he wanted.

"And which of your family have you with you in London?" was the next question.

"My mother and only sister," answered the young man.

"Dependent upon you, of course?"

"No, sir; my mother has her settlement, which is quite enough for all her wants," Brian said, stiffly.

"Hah! so much the better. Now just begin and tell me your story right through—don't keep anything back—be frank with me, and I will be

fair with you. I am not asking out of idle curiosity—I am not, upon my honour."

Thus exhorted, Brian told all—told everything, even to Harold's mishap; and during the course of the recital, Mr. Gyton senior indulged himself in many pinches of snuff—in many hems, and haws, and God bless me's, and upon my soul's.

It was early summer, and Mr. Gyton was arrayed in those wonderfully light trousers for which most City magnates seem to have some kind of mania; he had on a white waistcoat, displayed an imposing amount of shirt-collar, wore a light-blue silk cravat, and was shaved as clean as it was in the art of man to shave a human chin.

He always carried an immense white silk pocket-handkerchief and an equally enormous bandana.

The bandana was now spread out over his knee, like a flag laid over a railing, and he contemplated the way in which his boots were blacked; while with his plump legs well apart, and his stomach swelling out under his white waistcoat, and his heavy guard-chain strolling about over his chest, he sat and listened to Brian, interrupting him only with the remarks I have mentioned.

"Hah! poor lady—very sad—very sad indeed: has Mrs. Gyton been to see her yet—eh?"

Mr. Gyton was always fancying his wife was in league with his son, and he put the question fully expecting to hear that Mrs. Gyton and Mrs. Drewitt were bosom friends.

No such thing however.

"My brother took that affair I mentioned so much to heart," answered Brian, "and his health was so bad from the time we left Ireland, that he could not bear the sight of a stranger at all, and since his death my mother has never recovered her spirits sufficiently to care for visiting."

"Wonderful—bless me—extraordinary!"

"We are so differently situated now," began Brian, who really did not know what else to say; but Mr. Gyton interrupted him with the remark that he should have thought—but of course everybody knew their own business best (the millionaire was apt at times to be ungrammatical)—a little friendly visiting would have done Mrs. Drewitt good. "It's not well to sit moping," went on the great man; "brooding over sorrow only makes it worse; and we none of us can live alone—at least, that is my experience. I am sure when I was so ill, this

time two years—let me see, is it two years? yes, it must be pretty nearly two years—the doctors told me I must speak to no one, see no one, and think of nothing, for at least three months."

"They considered your case so serious?" suggested Brian, imagining some observation was expected from him.

"Serious? yes, indeed, it was serious; but their prescription would have killed me. I might as well have been put in my coffin at once, and so I told them. I went abroad, certainly, but what did I do there? I amused myself as much as possible. I saw everything there was was to be seen. I drove about, I ate foreign kickshaws, I talked French (Brian thought he would have given something to hear the French to which Dives had treated the Parisians), and what was the consequence?"

His clerk faintly hoped that he had come back better.

"Better! why you see me now. I have been better since than I ever was in my life; and that's what your mother ought to have, change and variety, instead of mouching in the house all day. Mrs. Gyton shall call upon her; yes, that she shall;" and Mr. Gyton having uttered the last

words as if in answer to an internal protest against any such erratic proceedings, took a pinch of snuff, blew his nose violently, and looked straight at Brian, who said—

"I hope, sir, you will not think me rude and ungrateful, but——"

"But what—what is it you have got to say?"

"I think my mother would rather—that is, we are so completely removed from the circle we——"

"Bless my soul! what ails the boy? he cannot finish a single sentence!" exclaimed Mr. Gyton, pettishly. "That is a shocking habit for any one to get into. Out with it!" he finished, working himself up to a pitch of desperation; "out with whatever you have got to say."

"I am quite certain," said Brian, steadily—so steadily that Mr. Gyton never guessed what the effort cost him—"that you would rather our house and your house were kept completely separate, when I tell you Mr. Francis Gyton once thought my sister very pretty; as she is," added Brian. "All things considered, my mother decided it was best he should not see so much of her, nor she of him. I hope I am not doing wrong in telling

you this, sir. We know exactly where we stand, and we do not wish to push ourselves into any house under false pretences;" and Mr. Brian drew himself up to his full height, and looked the very incarnation of pride and determination.

"Do you mean to say my son was ever fond of your sister?" asked Mr. Gyton, facing slowly round.

"I believe he was. I do not think my mother would ever have said it was best for him not to see Geraldine, had there not been something of the kind—and something definite, too."

"The young dog!" remarked the parent.

"I should be sorry to say anything calculated to annoy you, or to prejudice you against Mr. Francis. But the matter is all settled now; and you will understand, from what I have said, why I think my mother would rather Mrs. Gyton did not call."

"Thank you. It is always best to speak out fairly and frankly, is not it? Now there is something else I want to talk to you about. You have done your best, I think, since you came to us?"

"I have tried to do my best," answered Brian,

who was in horror lest he was going to be dismissed.

"Yes; and those who try generally succeed, don't they?" said Mr. Gyton, whose face seemed to Brian to get redder every moment, while his shirt-collar became more imposing. "I have been thinking of sending you abroad, very shortly."

"Do you mean, to any of the colonies?" asked Brian, hurriedly.

"No, no—only to France; it is rather a delicate piece of business, and I want it managed cleverly. If you conducted it to our satisfaction, I have no doubt we should be able to raise your salary next year."

"You are very kind to me, sir," Brian said.

"Not at all, not at all. I know what I am about. Take care of what you do, and you may make your way in the world yet. Now you can go; that is all I wanted."

But still Brian hesitated.

"I can have no objection to your repeating to Mr. Francis what has passed between us to-day; but at the same time, sir, I almost wish you would not mention the matter to him. It is all settled now; and——"

"Yes—yes—yes—yes," exclaimed Mr. Gyton, impatiently waving his hand; "I understand perfectly; be satisfied, I shall not make any mischief;" and Mr. Gyton rose from his chair as a hint that the interview must be considered ended, while Brian went back to his desk wondering greatly whither all his principal's questions had tended.

As for Mr. Gyton, he took an early opportunity of seeing Mr. Pryor and asking him what kind of girl that sister of Drewitt's might be; which question Mr. Pryor answered by inquiring why his brother-in-law wanted to know.

"Curiosity," was the reply.

"Nonsense," exclaimed Mr. Pryor; "you have heard some of that chatter of Munday's about Frank being fond of her, as Frank was, for that matter; but do not let it influence you against Brian; for though Munday does not like him, you will never get a more faithful nor trustworthy clerk."

"But I want to hear about this girl. Have you seen her?"

"Have I seen her?" repeated Mr. Pryor, with a nervous laugh. "Have I seen you? Did not I see them every day in Connemara before they ever left Kincorth? Did not I tell you I was in the house

when her father died, and that I heard the will read over too? Seen her! I should think I had."

"Do you think Frank really was fond of her?"

"How is it possible for me to answer such a question? He was at one time never out of the house, and he proposed for her. There, now the cat is out of the bag. But he had not courage to ask your consent, and Mrs. Drewitt would not allow the affair to go on without your knowledge. Frank asked me about it, and said he feared there was no chance of your approval; in which opinion, knowing there was no money nor prospect of any money, I agreed with him." Mr. Pryor was never weary of having a fling at his brother-in-law's money-bags.

"And so Frank gave her up?"

"I don't think he did; I think he is waiting for an opportunity to speak to you."

Thereupon Mr. Gyton grew rampant: was he a bear, was he a brute, was he a beast, that his own son should be afraid to speak to him on such a subject? "Hang it! sir," he said, "was I rolling in money when I married your sister?"

"No," was the reply; "but then neither were you dependent on your father for your support;

and Frank knows, as I know, that there are probably many young ladies you would prefer to a girl without fortune, and she an Irishwoman."

"Now I'll tell you what it is, Geoffry," and at this point Mr. Gyton became almost purple in the face with indignation, "I won't have you or anybody settling my affairs for me, and saying what I should like, or what I should not. If you must know what I should not like, it would be one of those Munday girls. I wonder," he went on, "that you, having just come into such a handsome property, should not have offered to make things square for Frank, and he your only near male relative. Not that I want the money; only I wonder, when these Drewitts seem to be such *protégés* of yours."

"You need not wonder," was the reply. "I may marry yet, myself."

"The deuce you may!" and Mr. Gyton surveyed him with perplexed amazement. "Ho, ho! I am beginning to see daylight, I think. Perhaps you are in love with the girl yourself?"

"Perhaps I am;" and Geoffry Pryor, seeing that his last chance of winning Geraldine was slipping through his fingers, stood at bay. "Indeed,"

he proceeded, "there is no use in my making any pretence about the matter. I did hope—I have hoped year after year since I first knew her, that some day I might be able to persuade her to become my wife. It may seem to you a ridiculous rivalry," added Mr. Pryor, hastily; "but I think I should have been far the honester lover of the two. Had I approved of Frank's conduct in the affair—had I thought it likely he would make her happy—I love her so well, that——"

"You would have taken his part against me. I am obliged to you, Geoffry."

"—That I would have done what I could to help him and her, though I do not pretend to much Quixotism either," finished Mr. Pryor.

"I must see this young lady, who seems to have turned all your heads," remarked Mr. Gyton.

"Well, then, listen to one word first. Frank has treated her very badly."

"How dare you say such a thing of my son, sir?"

"I shall say what I please about my nephew," retorted Mr. Pryor, coolly. "And I repeat, Frank has treated her very badly. Now, do not you go and treat her badly also. Make up your mind what

your intentions are in the matter, and see that Frank has not changed his, and then do what you like; only don't let him keep beating about the bush as he has been doing, ever since he first saw her."

"What relative is she to that Lady Emmeline woman who stayed with us one spring?"

"Lady Emmeline's husband and Miss Drewitt are first cousins," Mr. Pryor replied.

"Was that the fellow who got the estate?"

"The same."

"Any chance at all of our clerk having it back again?"

"Not the slightest."

"Are you going over to Ireland this year?"

"I do not know. No, I think not. I have some intention of selling Durrow, and buying a place in England."

"How long have you taken that idea into your head?"

"Not very long;" and Mr. Pryor returned his brother-in-law's stare unflinchingly.

"Don't take it to heart," said Mr. Gyton, with a certain kindness and sympathy in his manner; "don't, there's a good fellow."

"If you don't take it to heart, I am sure I need not," answered the barrister, bitterly; "I thought the very mention of such a *mésalliance* would have driven you out of your mind. The longer I live the less I see one need expect any person to act as it might have been supposed he would."

"Then you are sorry I do not altogether disapprove of the business."

"Do you think I am made of iron, that I should be glad?" was the reply; but Mr. Pryor never afterwards repeated this remark; on the contrary, when his sister told him how Frank's wandering habits and unsettled mode of life had been a source of grief and anxiety to both her and his father, how anxious they were for their only son to be "settled," and how thankful for her part she felt that he had chosen that "dear, sweet, pretty Geraldine, who was so fond of him," the barrister resigned himself to the inevitable, and began marvelling whether he could ever look on Geraldine as his niece.

He did not much think his nephew would make any woman very happy; but still, they were both young, and both in love; and, who knew but that it was best as it was?

Geoffry Pryor could not say it was not best, though it ended his dream, though it crushed out of his heart the hope he had been cherishing for years.

"I thought you would have liked Frank to marry either rank or fortune," he remarked to his sister.

"So we should, but Frank has never shown the slightest predilection for either one or the other, and really, young men now-a-days do make such matches that I am thankful he has chosen a lady by birth, and one whom we need not be ashamed to present to any person or in any place. There is young Munday—married his sister's maid! Mr. Lark has just had to send his son abroad to keep him out of the way of some most disreputable connexion. There is Lady Ackington's step-son run off with the governess—and in short, my dear Geoffry——"

"In short, my dear Maria, you think, with me, that Miss Drewitt will make almost too good a wife for Frank."

"I think no such thing," retorted Mrs. Gyton, indignantly; "for a young lady in Miss Drewitt's destitute position to make such a capital match is

remarkable; and had Mr. Gyton not taken such a fancy to her brother it never could have been brought about. Of course we shall be glad to see Frank settled. He has promised his father that he will really settle down to business now, and take that position to which, as the son of the head of the firm, he is entitled; and if he does that I shall say meeting with Miss Drewitt was the greatest blessing which could have befallen him. But, at the same time, I must add, that had he fancied Miss Ackington, or even one of the Miss Larks, I should infinitely have preferred a connexion which might have advanced his worldly interests as well as insured his domestic happiness."

"You really are getting eloquent, Maria."

"It is enough to make any one indignant to hear the way you talk. A stranger would really go away with the impression that Miss Drewitt had ten thousand a-year, and that she was conferring some honour on Frank by accepting him, instead of being only too glad to secure such a catch. Not but what," continued Mrs. Gyton, noticing an angry look in her brother's face; "not but what, I will say, they behaved admirably in the business,

which proves that, though they are poor, they have been educated in all the ideas of the highest ranks."

"What are the ideas of the highest ranks, Maria?" inquired Mr. Pryor.

"Not to take advantage—to act honourably—to do as you would be done by, and so forth."

"Oh! indeed!" remarked her brother; "after that, I think I may go home and propose to my housekeeper." But he did not go home, neither did he propose to his housekeeper: he drove to the house in Islington which Brian had taken for his mother after Harold's death, and found Geraldine alone in the drawing-room.

"I have come to wish you joy, dear," he said; but there was an unsteadiness in his voice as he spoke, and the hand which held hers trembled a little. "I hope you will be happy, and wealthy, and wise;" and he tried to smile; which proved so futile an attempt, that the tears came into Geraldine's eyes as she looked at him.

"I was foolish once," he went on, "and thought —Ah! well, you know what I thought. But that is all gone and past now, my child, and we will be good friends for ever, won't we?"

She put her other hand on his shoulder and said, "yes," with a sob in her voice.

"And if ever you are in any trouble or perplexity, you will come to me as you would to —— I am going to be your uncle," he added abruptly; "so what need I say more?"

"I will come," she replied.

"And we will forget all the past. You will forget I was ever silly enough to overlook the fact that I was old enough to be your father; that the time when I might have found favour in a young girl's eyes was in the summers before you were born."

"Don't," she pleaded; "don't; I can't bear it."

He put the hair back from her forehead, he held her away from him at arms' length, he looked at her sweet sorrowful face—looked at it as he knew he might never look in her face, or in the face of any other woman again, and then he took her to him and kissed her, as he had longed to do that day when they stood together on the hill above Kincorth.

"Is not there a nursery rhyme, Geraldine, which declares that some go up, and some go down? I feel that I have been among the latter class; and yet, if you are happy, my dear, I will make myself

happy too. It was a mistake; that is all; and in this world it has often seemed to me we pay as dearly for our mistakes as we do for our sins. You may think it a strange fancy, child. I am not going away from London; at least, I am only going to Durrow for a month, and I hope often to see you when I come back; constantly, indeed, after a time: yet still, I want to say good-bye; that was the chief word I came to speak to you to-day."

She knew what he meant; knew that it was not to her he was bidding farewell, but to the dream that had been so sweet and so exceeding beautiful. She knew that from thenceforth he wanted her to forget, as he intended to forget—that from that day forward, she was to seem to him his nephew's affianced wife, nothing more.

Nothing more. When he was standing on the cliffs above Durrow it seemed to him that the sea kept repeating that refrain eternally:

Nothing more—nothing—so long as the rain fell, and the wind blew, nothing for ever!

But Geraldine was happy, and talked with her mother of brighter days to come, when she should have no anxiety about ways and means; no need to pinch and save; no trouble, no sorrow.

"And they will push Brian on, mamma, and he will get, oh! so rich, and Frank wants him also to live with us till he marries; so that you need have no hesitation now about coming to us; and we will make you so comfortable, mamma, and take every care from you, and you shall be so happy—so happy!"

Should she? After a talk like this Mrs. Drewitt would go to her own room, and fall on her knees, and pray that her son and daughter might somehow learn the truth which she had not courage enough to tell them—that the days were not very far off when she should indeed have no more care, when she should be very happy, but not in this world—ah! no, not here.

CHAPTER V.

COUNTRY GOSSIP.

MR. PRYOR did not make a very long stay in Ireland. He merely remained a sufficient length of time to receive Mr. Connor's numerous reports; to ride round his property; to point out a few improvements he wished made; to distribute much charity; to be blessed with blessings that were beyond reason as they were without stint; to drive out a few times; to renew his acquaintance with the Durrow fishermen, and to hear all the local news.

Considering that Mr. Connor had a whole year's budget to unfold, the amount of information was not great, although it might be interesting. The gaugers had been over several times, and the constabulary, too, about the stills and the smugglers; "And one gauger was not afraid to say," went on Mr.

Connor "that if you, sir, did your duty, there would soon not be a still in Durrow; and about the smugglers, the coast-guard people declared I got share of the cargoes."

"We can both bear such remarks, I suppose, Mr. Connor," said Mr. Pryor, smiling.

"They are wild about it, that is the thing, you know, sir. Why, they do say that even Mr. Drewitt has turned against the stills, and is hunting them off his property there in the Joyce county. You would not know Mr. Maxwell, sir, if you were to see him now; he is all for law and order, and is making himself perfectly detested by everybody, high and low. He is abroad now, sir; travelling on the Continent with a Mr. Campnell from Oxford, who they do say is going to be his heir, and who, many people think, is something nearer even than that; and Lady Emmeline has left him—did you never hear of it, sir? She has left him and is gone to live with Mr. Vervensoe and his wife up at Cragantlet. The famine made a poor man of him, rich though he was once; and they are glad enough to have Lady Emmeline with them for the sake of what she pays. They do say the life he led that misguided woman, sir, lately was shocking—shocking.

I could not tell you half the stories that are in everybody's mouth about his wickedness, and his cruelty; and it all began, that is, the cruelty, because she refused to have this young man come to the house as her nephew, or come to the house while she was in it, in fact, at all."

"One cannot wonder at her doing so," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"No; but I am told he did—that he said, as she had no children, the least she could do was to let him have one of his own in the house; and then she threatened him—I could never rightly make out with what; and then he struck her; and then she got worse, and said she would leave him, and expose him; and after that he begged her pardon, and talked to her for more than an hour, and got somehow to the soft side of her; so that she said, at last, if he would let her go, and take what she brought with her, there might be peace between them."

"That could only have come through the servants," remarked Mr. Pryor, thoughtfully.

"It came to me, most of it, from my brother-in-law; but where he got it I cannot say."

"And so Lady Emmeline is really gone?"

"Yes, sir. I met her the other day out driving with Mr. and Mrs. Vervensoe; and she looked ninety. And, indeed, I was sorry to see her," finished Mr. Connor.

"I wonder if Maxwell Drewitt was married before he met with Lady Emmeline—secretly, I mean," said Mr. Pryor.

"Not a bit of it, sir; there never was a man less in the marrying notion than that same Mr. Drewitt, if all I have heard from Ryan about his young days is true. And if you are thinking that he was married first, and then married Lady Emmeline afterwards, you may put that notion away altogether. He was always far too wide-awake to get himself into any mess of that kind. Have you been round by Kincorth, sir? He is putting up the handsomest entrance there is in this part of the country at all; and they do tell me the house is like a palace, and that the gardens are just a show. He has made a second avenue, leading out on Calgillan Road; so that the drive now goes right through the property. I heard say—but I don't know whether it was true or not—that some young lady in England took a fancy to him, not knowing he was married; and

that when he came home, he cursed and swore at Lady Emmeline for living too long, and standing in his way."

"I think that story must be an invention," answered Mr. Pryor; "at least, I give my countrywomen credit for more taste than that would imply they were possessed of."

"I don't know," said Mr. Connor; "I fancy there is no way Mr. Drewitt cannot put on him when he likes. I am sure he came over here one day wanting gravel out of Durrow River, for his new avenue, and you would have thought I was Prince Albert, at the very least."

"Who is living at the Headlands, now?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"A Captain Crabbe, his name is; and awful work he and Mr. Drewitt have about the place not being kept in good order; and about the cows getting among the plantations. I don't wonder, myself, at Mr. Drewitt's being vexed to see the grounds—you remember how he used to have them; and now they are as bad as Cragantlet. He says he will never let it to anybody again, unless an Englishman; and not to him, unless he signs an agreement to keep the place as it

ought to be kept. He goes on dreadfully, though, when anything puts him out. When you are going along the Calgillan Road you can hear him cursing his men half a mile off."

"What do you suppose is the cause of his ill-temper?"

"Goodness knows, sir! He never had much of a temper, and now it is worse than ever. Ryan says, he thinks it must be that the devil he has inside him wears away his patience, and that he is glad to break out on anybody. There is one thing sure, he has been worse since Mr. Harold died. My brother-in-law told me he shut himself up for a whole day when the news came over, and that no one durst go near him; and I believe he sent to Galway, and telegraphed over to Mr. Brian, would he like to bury him in Eversbeg. But Mr. Brian wrote back, he would not be indebted to him for enough ground even to lay a dog in, let alone a brother."

"What an unforgiving set they are!"

"Yes, sir; and little though you might think it, Mr. Archibald Drewitt was just the same in some things. There was a man talking to me about him only the other day, a poor fellow of the name

of Byrne, who was turned off one of Mr. Drewitt's lots the time you stood for Duranmore. He would vote for you, and so Mr. Drewitt said he should go, and he got a farm under Mr. Waller; but someway, nothing went well with him, and then he took a place as labourer, with Mr. Maxwell. He had always liked Mr. Drewitt, for he had a kind, affable way with him, and a friendly look and a pleasant word for tenant and labourer just the same; and of course whenever he met Mr. Drewitt, for a while he touched his hat to him, expecting that Mr. Drewitt would give him time of day,* or say it was fine weather for the crops; or perhaps, how are the pigs? or is the wife getting better, Barney? But Mr. Drewitt never took the least notice of him, no more than if he hadn't been speaking to him every week for the previous ten years. As you may suppose, Barney quit touching his hat; but he said that about two months before Mr. Drewitt's death, he saw him creeping along the road, and that his mind misgave him the master was not long for this world. So he thought he would like to speak to him once before he went, (the old

* Meaning good-morning, or good-evening.

fellow cried when he told me about it), and he stood up close to the road-side of the footpath, so that Mr. Drewitt could not help seeing him; and he touched his hat, after twenty years, to his old landlord again, and says: 'I was sorry to hear you had been bad, sir; I hope your honour's better.' Mr. Drewitt looked him all over from head to foot, and the man was ragged enough; so perhaps, he thought his politics had not done much for him; but he never answered him, no more than if he had been dirt under his feet. Byrne never saw him after that, but he followed his coffin and saw it put in Eversbeg Abbey. I call a thing like that carrying hatred too far; but of course I am no judge."

Mr. Pryor walked on for a few steps in silence, slowly, thinking of all his agent had told him while he walked.

Then he began showing Mr. Connor the alterations he desired to have made, remarking at the same time—

"It is very likely my nephew and Miss Geraldine may pay you a visit next summer, and I should like the place to look its best in honour of them."

"Are they going," began Connor, considering in what suitable form of words to clothe his question, "are they going to make a match of it?"

"They are talking of doing so," answered Mr. Pryor, with a smile which he could not suppress.

"I am right glad to hear it, sir, if I may make so free as to say so. If Miss Geraldine is half as well as every one here wishes her, she will make him a good wife, and he will be a good husband to her!"

"Thank you, Connor." Mr. Pryor said this simply, and as though he was thanking Connor for some compliment paid to himself.

"And you think they will come next summer, sir?"

"I hope so," answered Mr. Pryor: but many things happened before that next summer which the barrister then had no idea the future could bring to pass.

He went to call on Lady Emmeline ere he returned to London, and found her what Connor had described—an old withered woman, bent and aged, but still rouged to the eyes, and dressed in the extreme of the fashion.

"I am so glad to see you, Mr. Pryor," she said, entering the room with skirts so voluminous

and crinoline so extensive that it was some time before the barrister could see which was woman and which steel and silk and lace. "It was so kind of you to come, considering all things, so very kind."

Mr. Pryor ventured to think it was very kind of her ladyship to say so.

"It is the truth, it is nothing but the truth; there are not many who would come running after an old women like me, though there was a time—" and Lady Emmeline stopped, and would have coloured had not the rouge on her face rendered such a performance as impossible as it was unnecessary. "Do you remember the election at Duranmore, Mr. Pryor? Ah! who that saw me then would ever have thought I could come to this?"

When a woman's case is beyond flattery it is beyond consolation. Mr. Pryor felt this and held his tongue.

"You have heard, I suppose," resumed Lady Emmeline, after leaving a decent space for compliment had he chosen to fill it up, "that unfortunate circumstances have compelled me to accept an aslyum here. Ah! dear; to think my husband should ever have treated me as he has done: and I made him, Mr. Pryor; it was my money

made him; and I did once think he was fond of me, I did indeed." Poor Lady Emmeline! there was no falsehood nor affectation about those words; and although her tears might wear strange channels down her cheeks, giving her a generally wrung-out and draggled appearance about the face, Mr. Pryor did not feel inclined even to smile, but listened sympathetically while the neglected poetess proceeded.

"I often think of those sweet lines by Moore," and she repeated—

"'When first I met thee warm and true,
There shone such truth about thee,
And on thy lips such promise hung
I thought 'twere sin to doubt thee.'

That was just my case, Mr. Pryor. I believed in him implicitly. I thought he could say nothing but what was good and true; that he was brave and honest. I have found how much mistaken I was since those days. But it is too late now for repentance, almost for regret;" and she went on whispering, as was her wont, the remainder of the lines—

"'Go, deceiver, go—
The heart whose hopes could make it
Trust one so false, so low,
Deserved that thou shouldst break it.'

So false, so low," she said, shaking her head sadly; "aye, and so base and cruel, too."

Thinking to divert her attention, Mr. Pryor asked her when she had been last in London, and when she intended paying it another visit, and in return got more than he bargained for.

In the spring she hoped to go to London again, but not till then, unless, indeed, dear Geraldine's marriage took place first, in which case she should make a point of being present.

"I was so truly delighted to hear of the probability of her settling so well," went on Lady Emmeline. "At one time, do you know, Mr. Pryor, we all thought you were to be the fortunate man. Shows how wrongly people may judge sometimes — even the cleverest people." Which was a back-handed blow at her husband.

Mr. Pryor winced—the wound was still green—but the lady proceeded. "I was always very fond of Geraldine—fonder than of either of her brothers —though Brian was a gentlemanlike lad, and promised to grow up handsome. I thought Geraldine took most after her mother. I suppose she is greatly improved in her appearance since she went to London?"

The barrister paused for a moment before he answered. He was thinking of the Geraldine who had stood talking with him on the way to Durrow, and wondering in what way Lady Emmeline could imagine it possible for such a vision of loveliness to be improved.

"She is thinner," he said; that seemed the truest and most unconcerned statement he could make, under the circumstances; "but otherwise I do not think her much altered."

"Ah! Well, that would be an improvement," said Lady Emmeline. "She was always a little too plump for perfect elegance."

"Opinions may differ on that point," Mr. Pryor would have answered, but he fortunately remembered that Lady Emmeline, who had always prided herself on her graceful figure and perfect elegance, was as thin as a thread-paper.

He therefore contented himself with saying, that when she came to London she would be able to judge for herself; and shortly afterwards took his leave, though earnestly entreated by Mrs. Vervensoe, *née* Munks, to stop for dinner.

"I had five hundred and sixty-one things I wanted to ask you about," said that energetic

lady; "and I had twice as many, I know, to tell you; but, however, if you must go, why you must. It is treating us very shabbily, though; and I do not know what Mr. Vervensoe will say to me when he comes in, about letting you go."

"You should tell him, 'a wilful man must have his way,' and then he can say nothing," answered Mr. Pryor.

"But, really now, is not it mean and shabby?"

"It would be, perhaps, if I could remain; but as I cannot, you must exercise your charity, and think as well of me as you can."

"There is no fear of our not thinking well of you. Good-bye, then, if it must be good-bye. Give my love to Geraldine, and tell her I shall expect a piece of the wedding-cake; she had a bit of mine to dream on, I know, when she was not three years old."

With which pleasing reminiscence Mrs. Vervensoe allowed their visitor to depart; and accordingly Mr. Pryor rode away from Cragantlet, which, though twenty miles from Durrow, supposing Duranmore were taken by the way, was not more than fifteen, if the traveller turned up the lane leading past

Regan's, crossed the Calgillan coach-road, and then kept straight on for the ruins of Castle Cronach.

Under any circumstances it was a long ride, and a lonely; and Mr. Pryor had got very weary of his own thoughts before he reached the high-way, with its many turnings and windings, along which they had trotted all four abreast the first day he ever beheld Durrow.

He had not gone a mile, however, past Castle Cronach, when a new subject for thought presented itself, in the shape of a jaunting-car, on which were seated two gentlemen, one on each side, with the driver occupying the position that of right belongs to him, but which in Ireland he seems never to assume, unless dire necessity compels his doing so.

One of the gentlemen was Maxwell Drewitt; the other, a dark moustached youth, apparently not more than two and twenty, though he had a beard that might have been growing for a dozen years.

"Mr. Campnell, I presume," thought Mr. Pryor, as the car pursued its way to Duranmore and he to Durrow. "I wonder if he wears that mass of

hair to prevent any one tracing a likeness to his father; if it be his father," corrected the barrister.

"Where could they be coming from, Connor?" he asked during the course of the evening.

"Most likely from Castlebar. It is nearer from here to Castlebar than it is from Galway to here, and a nicer country to pass through too. And so you saw Mr. Campnell; and what kind of a looking young gentleman is he, sir, if I may inquire?"

"He is so covered with hair, it is almost impossible to say what he is like. He has dark eyes, as well as I could observe, and that is all I can tell you about him."

"And he is only twenty-one, I hear."

There was the rustling of a woman's dress through the hall, and Mr. Pryor, turning round sharply, guessed that Mrs. Connor had been listening at the open door.

There was nothing in their conversation that he cared if all Ireland were cognizant of, yet the circumstance gave him an uncomfortable impression, and made him feel a little doubtful about Mrs. Connor's entire trustworthiness.

While she, poor Jenny! she stole out to a field

at the back of the house, where her children were playing in the summer's evening, and sitting down on the grass, took the youngest to her heart, while she thought about the boy she had borne in the times gone by; whom she had never nursed on her knees; whom she had never folded in her arms; whom she had been forced to send away; whom she had never through the years set eyes on; who would never be told the name of his mother, but whom, she knew, was coming to Kincorth that day, to be, if he lived, Kincorth's owner, when perhaps she and his father were both dead.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT MET BRIAN.

A WINTER'S day in London, more especially when that winter's day happens to be raw, damp, drizzling and foggy, is one, I think, of the most depressing ordeals through which a human being can be called to pass—a day when the streets are sloppy; when the pavements are greasy; when the passing omnibuses are full of wet men, and wetter women; when people poke you in the eyes with their umbrellas; when more people poke you in the ribs, and jostle you into the middle of another set of people, who shove you back again and probably anathematize you into the bargain; when there is no business doing in shops, where the gas is lighted, nor in offices, where the gas is

lighted likewise; when if you are out collecting money, nobody will pay you; when if you owe any person any money, everybody makes a point of boring you (in the gas-light), and saying they felt sure of finding you within; when the apples in the costermongers' carts look damp and dirty; when there is a dull yellow, leaden sky above, and an atmosphere you can taste around you; when London Bridge looks as much like water as the Thames; when you do not feel as if there ever had been any fine weather on earth; when you are quite certain there will never be any fine weather again;—this, I say, is the kind of day to try a man's equanimity, and to put his cheerfulness to the test.

There was one man however who, having been set down by an omnibus coming from the Borough at the corner of Mansion House and Princes Streets, walked along, careless of the weather, careless of the passers-by, careless of the dull leaden sky, of the greasy pavements and the sloppy horse-roads. He looked neither to right nor left as he strode away after his business; he was evidently thinking of something pleasant, carrying his sunshine along with him, as some country-people carry lanterns: that man was

Brian Drewitt; he had just come from Paris, and he was bound for Austinfriars.

He wanted to see Mr. Gyton before he left the City, and as it was getting on for three o'clock he hurried his pace and dashed on towards Austinfriars as though he were walking for a wager.

If you do not know Austinfriars, reader, you are not acquainted with one of the queerest nooks that the march of modern improvement and the heartlessness of railway companies has left us. Before some new extension gets its bill passed, I should recommend you to go and see that curious spot, where, in 1253, says Pennant, "was erected by Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, the house of the Augustins, for friars eremites of that order." Until very recently, one of the oldest churches in London (built before 1361) stood about the centre of Austinfriars; the external walls still, I believe, remain, but the interior was, unhappily, destroyed by fire some few years since.

In it were laid great people: Edmund Guy de Meric, who, it is stated, incited Richard II. to the murder of the Duke of Gloucester; Lucie, daughter of Barnaby, Lord of Milan; the great Earl of Arundel, beheaded on Tower Hill, in 1397; the

Earl of Oxford, who suffered a similar fate in 1463; Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, in 1521; while, twenty-five years afterwards, this church was filled with herrings, by order of Henry VIII., who used Grey Friars, at the same period, as a warehouse for wine.

There are fewer historical records of Austinfriars than of almost any other spot about the City. In a map of London, A.D. 1563, the old house of the Augustines is not even marked; yet some gleams of the olden glory still lie here and there—in its out-of-the-way courts—in its old-fashioned houses —under the stones of its ancient church—for the curious in such matters to note, as they pass by.

Some time, it may be, that I shall ask you, reader, who have so often before this, strayed with me into world-forgotten corners—into silent and deserted nooks—to turn aside from the bustle and din of the City streets, and spend a few minutes with me in Austinfriars; but that day must not be now, when Brian Drewitt is hurrying along to catch the head of the great house of Gyton, Lark, Munday, Hatfield, and Company, before he takes his portly person westward.

Very cheerfully Brian Drewitt pursued his way.

He knew that he had accomplished the business on which he was sent abroad satisfactorily.

He felt certain he should receive the praise of his employers for the manner in which he had performed his mission. It had been intimated to him more than once, that in being sent abroad he was also being put on his trial, and that if he stood the test of the negotiation entrusted to him, his salary would be at once increased, and every facility afforded him for pushing his way up to the very top of the tree.

When he reached the top, he had then his vague designs of vengeance to gratify; but upon the lower branches were hanging sweet home fruits, that Brian longed to gather. He wanted to prevail on his mother not to live with Geraldine; to live near, but not with her; to have her all to himself, to provide with the little luxuries that her delicate health required—that it would be a pleasure and a pride to him to place around her.

If she went with Geraldine, it would be Frank Gyton, and not Brian Drewitt, whose money might anticipate her wants, and outspeed her very wishes. No one knew better than Brian how both he and she had saved, and pinched, to pay

the expenses attendant on Harold's trial—on their removal to London—on his long sickness—on his early death. Even Geraldine never fully understood all her mother had denied herself, so that Harold might not suffer for lack of anything he desired. And now, hungrily and greedily, the son who did comprehend everything, longed to have his mother, who had suffered so much, all to himself, that he might make her life a happy one at last, and render the evening of her days the calmest, the brightest, the peacefullest portion of her existence.

There are some men who, from their youth upwards, need to have something to love—something upon which to pour out all their affection, all their devotion. It may be father, brother, sister, mother, child, that they gather into their heart, and keep there: whatever the object may be, it is love they give, rather than love they receive. It is necessary to their very existence to be planning, thinking, working, for some one; and during the entire of his short life, Brian Drewitt had been planning, thinking, working, for others rather than himself.

He could scarcely remember the time when

the love he felt for his mother was not a species of idolatry. Instinctively, perhaps, even from childhood, the stronger nature knew that the weaker had need of it; and as years went by, and the child became a boy, and the boy a man, this feeling grew stronger and stronger, till at last Brian came to understand that whatsoever his mother stood in need of, if it were in the power of a human being to procure it, she should have her wish gratified.

And at last he felt that it would soon be in his power to make his mother's life comfortable and happy, and to free it from care. Comfortable and happy—did I not say once before, that was not to be in this world for ever?

Onwards he sped; eager, sanguine, triumphant. Mr. Gyton, senior, was not gone; and with his snuff-box on the table, with his bandana ready for use, with his coat thrown well back, and his thumbs stuck in the arm-holes of his superfine black cloth waistcoat, he listened to Brian's narration with every sign of approval visible in his face.

When Brian had quite finished he said—

"We did not expect you home until to-morrow; but now that you are here I believe my son has

something to say to you. Meantime, I may add that you can draw your salary at the rate of two hundred and fifty pounds per annum from to-morrow."

Mr. Gyton had a way of uttering those two words "per annum" which always seemed to give money its true value in the listener's ears; and accordingly, Brian Drewitt thanked him very heartily for the advance, and had just reached the middle of a neatly-turned sentence when Mr. Gyton, junior, entered.

"Don't stand wasting your time here, Brian," he said; "but go home at once. There's something up there. Geraldine sent here this morning to know your address, and telegraphed for you."

"What is it?" Brian asked: he stretched out his one hand and seized the table tightly as he spoke.

"Your mother is very ill, I believe; don't turn so white, Brian; it may be nothing to signify. I have told them to get you a cab. Should you like me to go with you?"

"No, thank you," Brian answered; "no—no." Even then he wanted to have her all to himself, and he blindly made his way out of Mr. Gyton's

presence-chamber, and across the clerks' office, and down the stairs, and so out into the court, at the entrance to which a hansom was waiting for him.

"Drive fast!" that was all he could say; but the man obeyed his instructions literally. Up the City Road, round by Duncan Terrace, out across the Lower Road, and then up Upper Street, till they were close to Canonbury Tower.

"Set me down here," Brian said, pushing up the little trap-door, and the driver pulled up instantly.

"Your fare?" was the next question; and Brian counted him out a sum, which even the man's conscience pricked him for demanding, without a remonstrance, but stupidly, and as though he were drunk.

He never could tell what feeling possessed him to stop the cab and walk quietly up the street where was his home. He never knew how he got from the cab to the door opposite his own door, where he paused and looked across the way.

Every blind in the house was down.

He saw a gentleman coming out; a gentleman whose carriage stood waiting for him to enter.

Brian crossed the street and asked him what was the matter.

"A poor lady has done with all suffering," was the reply.

"Mrs. Drewitt?"

"Yes; are you her son?"

It was too much, the reaction was too great; and Brian would have fallen on the pavement, but that he staggered by chance against the doctor's brougham.

"Come in," said the doctor, "and I will go in with you."

"I won't," answered Brian; and he turned and walked back down the street, like one in a dream.

For hours and hours he walked about before he could face the house again. With his clothes soaked through, with his hair damp and wet, shivering with the cold, heartbroken and miserable, Brian Drewitt at last made up his mind to face the inevitable, and retraced his steps towards home.

It was late in the evening when he approached the door; the street-lamps had long been lighted; the shops in Upper Street were all brilliantly illuminated as he passed by; the pavements were crowded with people, well-dressed, lively, happy,

thoughtless; with women going to make their purchases; with women only curious to look through the windows at the goods displayed within; with men on their way from the City to Holloway and Highbury; with the husbands, and the brothers, and the lovers of the females, who were going shopping, or window-gazing; with idlers and loungers of all descriptions—amongst whom Brian made his way, with a dull, stupid sorrow tearing at his heart, with a conviction that he was going home to meet something very dreadful—something that he still doubted whether he should have strength of mind to meet.

He lifted his hand to the knocker, and rapped hesitatingly for admittance. When the servant opened the door she put her apron to her eyes, and said, "Oh! sir——"

"I have heard," Brian interrupted, sharp and stern, and walked straight into the parlour.

There sat Geraldine—her eyes red with weeping, her cheeks pale with watching. Mrs. Gyton was holding one hand, and Frank the other, while a man whom Brian had never seen before was standing with his back to the fire, talking vehemently and positively.

At sight of Brian, he stopped short, and while Geraldine, with a cry, ran towards her brother, he stooped down and inquired of Mr. Gyton who the new comer might be.

"Her brother," was the answer; and when Brian came forward into the room, he found his hand clasped in that of the stranger, who said—

"It is a poor welcome home for you, this—but we did all for her we could."

"May I ask your name?" Brian's tone was as quiet as though nothing unusual were lying in the house.

"Murphy—at your service. It is many a year since I saw you; and it is just the same time since I saw your poor mother. God help her! she must have gone through an awful lot of trouble. I can remember her as young-looking as your sister is now, with her hair as soft and dark every bit as yours, Miss; but there is one comfort, she can feel no more sorrow where she is gone: women's heads are not turned grey with grief there. Just let him be," he whispered to Francis Gyton. "You know he must feel it, so do not try to get him to put on a face before you."

Brian had sat down at the table and rested his

head on his hand. All at once he looked up, with no dimness in his eye, with no hesitation in his voice—

"I should like to see her," he said; "may I go up stairs?"

Geraldine rose to go with him, but Mr. Murphy gently pushed her aside.

"With your permission," he observed, taking one of the candles off the table, and he and Brian left the room.

"Did you attend her?" Brian asked.

"No, I was only called in last night. She had a very good doctor, though—very good. The whole College of Surgeons could not have saved her, nor all the physicians in London to the back of that."

"It was sudden, I suppose?" Brian scarcely spoke above a whisper, and he drew Mr. Murphy nervously into the drawing-room, still evidently unwilling to look upon the dead.

"Towards the last, very; but these cases always are sudden. She must have known how it would end for a considerable time past."

"Can you tell me if she had been long under treatment?"

"Twelve months, her doctor says; but your

sister never knew a syllable of what was the matter with her. She does not appear to have told a living soul belonging to her a word about her disease."

"And was it incurable from the first?"

"Yes."

"Could money have kept her with us a little longer? had anxiety any share in hastening her death?"

"I do not know; I cannot tell. Anxiety always aggravates sickness, as a rule; and money also, as a rule, alleviates it; but in this particular case I cannot say. I do not know how she has lived; I can only guess how she must have suffered."

There was a moment's silence; then Mr. Murphy said, "Are you ready?" and Brian bent his head in answer.

The bed-chamber opened off the drawing-room with folding-doors: as Mr. Murphy turned the handle of one of these, Brian put his hand on the surgeon's, and held it so tight that he could not shoot back the lock.

"Shall we wait a while?" he asked.

"No—no;" and Brian relaxed his grasp and put up his right hand to his head, as though, fancying he had on his hat, he was going to remove it.

The bed was made, and unoccupied; there was a fearful formality in the arrangement of the furniture; something terrible in the prim, frigid neatness which pervaded the apartment.

There had been a space cleared in the centre, and there on trestles stood the shell.

Mr. Murphy laid his hand on the lid, and looked inquiringly at his companion.

Brian nodded, and the surgeon pushed the lid aside.

There she lay; there she slept the sleep that on this side eternity knows no waking. She had been tossed by the billows; she had been amid the waves; she had been buffeted by the winds; she had been beaten hither and thither by the world's storms; she had crossed the ocean of suffering; she had been out in seas of trouble; she had felt the deeps go over her head, and passed through torrents of tribulation—but it was all over now—the voyage, the fear, the struggle, the misery—for the Lord had taken her, after much weariness, unto Himself to rest, and she was at last brought by Him "unto the haven where she would be."

There she lay, with the wrinkles smoothed out of her face; with the lines care had written erased

from her forehead; with the beauty of her youth almost restored to her—so unlike what she had been in her later life, so different to what he could remember her, that Brian Drewitt looked in Mr. Murphy's face incredulously.

"That is not my mother?" he said; and he drew back a step.

"It is all you will ever again see for your mother here," was the reply, uttered slowly and thoughtfully.

Brian stooped over the coffin. Mr. Murphy always believed he was listening to hear if she breathed; but he was only touching her lips with his lips—only silently whispering words of tenderness—of passionate sorrow—that he had a vague feeling she might understand, though she could never answer.

"Would you mind leaving me for a minute?" he said, at last. "Would you go into the next room and wait for me?—if you go down stairs some of them will be coming up."

Without uttering a syllable, Mr. Murphy placed the candle on the chimneypiece, and left Brian, closing the folding-doors after him.

The surgeon thought that very likely Brian

wanted to have a good cry unnoticed—unpitied. He had seen as strong natures weeping in their agony and despair. He knew the blow must have been heavy—the wound sharp; and he knew, likewise, that at such times sorrow must have its way in some form or other: for all of which reasons, he left Brian willingly, and, walking to one of the windows in the drawing-room, lifted a corner of the blind and looked out.

Had he been able to see what was passing in the inner chamber, he would scarcely have remained contemplating the wet street and the flickering gas-lamps for so long.

At the head of his mother's coffin Brian stood erect; one arm was stretched out over the dead, and he was swearing an oath, to himself, full of vengeance and of hate. Beside her coffin he was pouring out imprecations on all who had ever caused her misery—just as Maxwell had said the peasants sat beside their desolate hearths, cursing the men who had taken the roofs off their heads, and left them without a shelter from the storm.

There were no tears in Brian Drewitt's eyes—there was no softness in Brian Drewitt's heart. We had best come out and close the door, and

leave him alone; for the days were nigh at hand when he repented him of his blasphemy—when he covered his face, and acknowledged his sin, and bowed his head, while that angel of the Lord, —which teaches unto men all manner of good things—suffering—showed him how God's ways are not as man's ways—how they are eternally wise and eternally just, although, to our short-sightedness, they may oftentimes seem indeed inscrutable and past finding out.

CHAPTER VII.

MADCAP'S LAST LEAP.

THERE was a great meet of the Duranmore fox-hounds at Kincorth, and on the lawn and about the drive were hunters in abundance: gentlemen in scarlet coats and buckskins by the dozen, grooms *ad libitum*, and hangers-on past counting.

It was a clear, bright morning. Every man's spirits were of the highest; every man's girths of the tightest; everybody was expecting prime sport; and the breakfast of which they had just partaken was one certainly not calculated to damp their courage or to retard their pace.

Wine had been drunk freely—conversation had circulated more freely still. Mr. Maxwell Drewitt was a good host, and knew how to make his guests comfortable; and the absence of a lady

of the house tended, in the opinion of most present, to make the repast pleasanter still. Mr. Drewitt was perhaps the gayest of all present. He laughed, he joked, he talked, he drank—not to excess—but certainly beyond his wont; and he backed his mare, Madcap, to leap Durrow River—if, as was most likely, the fox took that course—better than the youngest hunter on the lawn. "She is nine years old," he said; "but I would not change her for any other animal in my stable."

"It is a shame for you to be hunting her still," remarked Mr. Frost, who was Lady Marsden's nephew.

"It would be a shame for you to hunt her," retorted Maxwell; "for you ride, I suppose, thirteen stone every pound of it; but I, who am a light weight, cannot possibly distress her; and then she loves the tally-ho! and the long swinging gallop after the hounds as much as either of us."

They had all risen from table by this time, and were standing, some on the lawn, some in the hall, some on the drive, making altogether a bright and animated picture.

Nothing prettier indeed in its way can be

imagined than the scene at Kincorth that morning. Far below lay Duranmore Bay, with its green islands shining like emeralds in the beams of the midday sun. Although it was winter, the morning had broken up clear and bright and pleasant; the mountains were not enveloped in mists; you could see over the country for miles and miles; in the distance the Twelve Pins showed blue and distinct against the sky, while for foreground the looker-on had the lawn and trees and gardens of Kincorth; steeds plunging and pawing; grooms running hither and thither; the dogs kept in order by the whipper-in, and red coats and buckskins and top-boots appearing at every turn.

The fulness of life seemed to be in that place at that moment; it was impossible to imagine sickness prostrating one of those men, sorrow touching one of their hearts, anguish wringing one of their souls.

The winter's sun looked down upon the scene, brightening and beautifying all it touched.

"One moment, Mr. Drewitt, if you please." It was Ryan, who spoke to his employer when Maxwell came out to mount.

"Make haste, then."

"I should like to see you alone."

"What a fool you must be, Ryan, coming at this time! I cannot leave my guests. Say what you have got to say here, or else leave it to a more convenient opportunity."

"I must speak to you in private. Lead your horse up to that privet hedge, if you do not wish to come into the house, for speak to you I must and will."

Maxwell looked at the man who uttered these words, looked at him from head to foot, but Ryan never flinched.

"I am in earnest," he said; "and I am sober. Let me speak to you; I will not keep you five minutes."

Mr. Drewitt flung the reins to a groom.

"Hold her a second," he said, and turned aside with his lawyer.

"Now, what excuse have you to make for intruding upon me?" he fiercely demanded: "what do you mean by coming up here at such a time?"

"I have a letter from London this morning," said Ryan. "Mrs. Drewitt is dead."

"How the devil does her death concern me?" asked Maxwell.

"It concerns me," answered Ryan. "There is her son dead—here is she dead. Mr. Drewitt, I can't stand it. I won't stand it any longer."

"What do you mean? Do you think I killed them?"

"Yes, I do," returned Ryan; "you and I between us. I wish to God I had let old Neill do his worst! I wish to the Lord I had been hung, drawn, and quartered, before I ever was indebted to you for sixpence! But I won't hold my tongue any longer. You promised me to do well for Mrs. Drewitt and her children, and this is the end of it —this!"

"Ryan, you are drunk," said his employer, putting a curb upon his temper as he spoke.

"If I am, it is on grief then," was the reply. "Oh! why did I ever put it in your power to beggar them—to send them away from home, and friends, and all, to die!"

"That is a question you ought to be able to answer for yourself without any difficulty," sneered Maxwell Drewitt; "and as for holding your tongue, or not holding it, you can exercise your own discretion. I am not in your power. You may try to ruin me if you like, but you will only ruin your-

self. You may say you gave the later will to me, and added the codicil to the former will yourself, at my dictation; but you have only your own word; you have no proof, no corroborative evidence. And look here, Ryan," he added; "so sure as you begin a game of that kind, I will have you shut up in a mad-house for life. Poor fool! you thought to frighten me, I suppose. Go home, man, go home; I am not such a born idiot as to let any created being have the whip-hand of me."

"But I have the whip-hand of you," answered Ryan; "and if you don't do the thing that is right by that woman's children, by —— I'll use it. I am no fool either, Maxwell Drewitt. Yes, for all your properties, you are no more than Maxwell Drewitt to me now. And I knew that that Campnell you are so taken on with is your own son, and that it was he, not Harold Drewitt, who should have stood in the dock. Ha! have I touched you at last? Who is the fool now? Can nobody put two and two together, do you think, but yourself? I won't keep silence," he went on passionately; "it was only last night I was dreaming about Mrs. Drewitt, and I thought she came to the foot of my bed and said: 'Ryan, you know all about

[illegible] answered Ryan. "There is [illegible]—here is the [illegible]. Mr. Drewitt, I [illegible] it. I won't [illegible] any longer."

"What do you mean? Do you think I killed them?"

"Yes, I do," returned Ryan: "you and I murdered them. I wish to God I had let old Neill do his worst! I wish to the Lord I had been hung, drawn and quartered before I ever was indebted to you for sixpence! But I won't hold my tongue any longer. You promised me to do well for Mrs. Drewitt and her children, and this is the end of it —this!"

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ur asking.
at Durrow,
Now do your
ry early in the
ard against card

that robbery; clear my poor boy's memory.' And I believe she was there, that is, her spirit. I am sure she came and parted the curtains, and spoke just those very words to me; and I will clear his memory, unless you give back Kincorth, or Kincorth's value, to him who has the best right to it."

"They are waiting for me, and I must go," said Maxwell Drewitt, and his voice sounded so strange and unnatural, that Ryan's rage was quieted for the moment. "What do you mean to do?" he asked.

"What do you mean to do?" and Maxwell faced round on him like a maniac.

"I mean to go to London and tell Brian Drewitt all," was the reply.

"You can tell nothing without criminating yourself," said Maxwell.

"I know that."

"And you will tell him—about—tell him of what you suspect, in short?"

"Yes, everything. I swore long ago I would be even with you one day; and I will be even with you now."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am;" and the pair drew back a step or two from one another, and looked each in his enemy's face as they had done years before—years and years previously, in that little cottage down by the sea.

"I don't think you will," began Maxwell, after he had stared for a moment full into Ryan's eyes; "I don't think you will. You say Arthur Campnell is my son, and you say right; but you have not said who Arthur Campnell's mother is. Can you guess?"

"No, and do not want to guess. What can it signify to me who she was?"

"Will you guess?"

"I have told you I will not."

"Shall I tell you her name?"

"If you like."

"Do you ask me to tell you?"

"I do not."

"Then I will tell you without your asking. Arthur Campnell's mother lives over at Durrow, and her husband's name is Connor. Now do your worst. The man must get up very early in the morning who means to play card against card with me."

"You are the damndest villain, and the most cursed liar!"

"Am I? Go and ask your sister if I lie."

"I will; and if I find you are lying, as I feel sure you are—if I make sure you have thrown dirt on her name to shield your son from disgrace, then, Maxwell Drewitt, then the dogs pity your cries, for I won't. I swear I won't!"

But he spoke the last words to the air, for Mr. Drewitt had already left him, and was walking rapidly across the lawn to the spot where his horse stood.

In his heart he was cursing the hunt and the guests, the sunshine and the breeze; and as he rode to the piece of plantation on the side of Calgillan Hill, where the underwood was thick and the fox hidden away, he wished he had sent Ryan out of the country long before, and that, let come or go what would, he had not told him anything about Jenny, whom he had betrayed and ruined and deserted in the years that were now so very far behind him—in the years that could return no more.

"You were right—he has made for Durrow," said Mr. Frost; and the words were scarcely out of

his lips before the hounds were off in full cry, and the horses off after them.

On and away; galloping across the fields; leaping the eternal stone fences; plunging through bogs; dashing over the moorland—in the excitement of that mad ride Maxwell forget everything save the wild pleasure which is caused by passing at the full top of a horse's speed through the air—forgot everything save the pace at which Madcap was going, and the ease with which she took her leaps.

"Now for the river!" he said, and as though Madcap had heard his words, she laid back her ears, and bounded on like a thing possessed, towards the bank.

Age had not stiffened her limbs, nor crippled her pace. There was not a horse in the field could keep up with her save one, and that was a hunter belonging to Captain Crabbe, and ridden by that gentleman's son, who, having been trying all the way to pass Madcap, now shot by, almost touching the chesnut as he did so, and eliciting a volley of oaths from Maxwell for his awkwardness.

Boring on the bit, Madcap tore along. All her spirit was up, and she flew after Captain Crabbe's

fleabitten old screw, as Maxwell had often contemptuously called the horse, like the wind.

Maxwell had his work cut out to hold her. It was a beautiful piece of turf, smooth and level as a bowling-green. There was no break, no pause, till they came to the river, which ran broad and deep between two steep and awkward banks away to the sea. Mr. Crabbe was already close on the brink; but at that very moment, when he thought he was going to beat the chesnut for ever—when with a blow of his heel and cut of his whip he was urging his horse to the leap, the brute swerved suddenly round, and sticking its plain ugly neck out straight before it, galloped back as hard as it could go along the way it had come.

Mr. Crabbe, taken completely unawares by this sudden manœuvre, had scarcely recovered himself from the shock of the sudden baulk before there came a tremendous crash.

Maxwell, tearing on for the leap himself, could not get out of the way. He saw the collision coming, but was powerless to avert it. He felt a shock just as though a battering ram had come up against him; a shock which lifted him right out of the saddle—lifted him so high, that he

could remember the reins being jerked out of his hand; and then he came down flat, with his back on the ground and his face to the sky; in which position he lay while the whole field jumped over him.

"Drewitt's down—Drewitt's dead!" was the shout; but not a man could stop his horse to look after him until Mr. Frost, who had not been going at quite so furious a pace as the others, managed to pull up, and dismount.

"I'm not dead," Maxwell managed to say, "but I'm badly hurt; don't touch me. I didn't try to move because I knew the horses would leap me, and that if I stirred I should likely have my brains knocked out. Let me lie quiet for a while; don't stop for me, go on."

But there were about half a dozen gathered about him by this time who would not go on; who sent to the nearest cabin and had a door taken off its hinges, on which Maxwell, groaning with pain, was laid gently and tenderly.

"The mare?" he said; but nobody answered him.

"The mare?" he repeated, and Mr. Frost asked—

"Where is the chesnut? he wants to know."

"She is all right," answered some one.

"You are not telling me the truth?" Maxwell said, turning his eyes on the speaker, for he was too much shaken to move his head. "I want to know about the mare."

"Well, then, if you must know, poor old Madcap has taken her last leap, and she died in taking it."

The injured man made no answer; he closed his eyes; whilst all the people around looked at one another.

There was not a person present who did not feel grieved at Madcap's end.

She had been to each of them almost as a friend—so gallant, so fleet, so daring, so proud of herself, and her small head, and her arched neck, and her flowing mane, and her shining coat—so proud, so petted, so dainty, so conceited, and so beautiful, that Lord Marsden once said, "He thought there must be a woman's soul inside her, for that he had never seen an animal give herself such airs and graces before."

Poor Chessy—poor Madcap! She had made on like the rest for her leap, and taken it—taken it at the worst point she could have chosen. Missing her footing on the other side, she fought desperately for a moment to keep herself from

slipping while she tried to scramble up the bank. One man made a clutch at her bridle, but missed it, fortunately, perhaps, for him; for, with a scream almost such as a human being might have uttered, she fell backwards into the river.

Flynn had always said she was as sensible as a Christian, and those who saw that mad struggle for life, who heard that sound which is never uttered by a horse, save under the influence of some terrible pain, or some frightful fear, thought that Madcap must have had a kind of human comprehension of what the river's bed held for her—great blocks of granite, which cut her all to bits; huge stones, against which she was knocked all to pieces; and just enough water to float her, lying on her side and kicking convulsively, down the stream, which was dyed red with her blood.

Poor Madcap—poor beauty! She kept her head up as long as she could, but soon her strength failed, her neck sank below the surface, the water filled her nostrils, and before many minutes it was all over.

"She had," as Maxwell's informant truly said, "taken her last leap, and died in taking it."

"And there's not her like left in Ireland," remarked Flynn, who in the course of the afternoon dragged her, stiff and stark, out of the river, at a curve half a mile below where the accident happened, and then he fell to sobbing over her like a child.

"I'll hamstring that brute of Crabbe's the first time I get the chance," he said to the grooms who came with him; "a score of such ill-looking divils wouldn't make one of her. Not but what we must all die some day," he concluded; "and I don't know that I wouldn't as soon she had died that way as any other."

As for Maxwell, in the midst of his own pain, in the midst of his own agony, he could not get the thought of that dead animal out of his mind.

It was not because he had ever cared for her, as some men do care for their horses; it was not that her wise, winning ways, her playful tricks, her never-failing spirit had made him feel for her any real affection; but he had been proud of her, vain of her. She had been his, and she was the best mare in the county; and above and beyond all this, there seemed to Maxwell something more than mere accident about the whole affair.

Like many men who are utterly irreligious, he was superstitious; and, lying there with his eyes shut, his mind was busy, piecing, in a kind of delirium, past, present, and future into a connected whole.

He saw Brian bidding his farewell to that mare the night he left Kincorth and went out into the world. He saw Harold taking that desperate leap at the Headlands; and he remembered, at the same time, that Harold was dead. He had heard that morning of Mrs. Drewitt's death; he had been asked by Ryan to act justly at last by his uncle's living children—and he refused. Ryan had threatened him; and he in return stabbed the lawyer in his tenderest point.

He had ridden out on Harold's mare; and now Madcap was dead, too; while he was being carried, though he did not know it, straight as the mare who bore him could go to Durrow.

The same thing, or worse, might have happened, no matter on what horse he had been mounted; but, as the "wicked flee when no man pursueth," so the wicked likewise are apt to be superstitious about circumstances to which better men would attach no importance; and the fever, which was

already upon him, made Maxwell look at all things with a fearful and troubled mind.

He thought of what Ryan had said about Mrs. Drewitt; and he wondered if, when he was alone, she would come and stand at the foot of his bed, too.

How many more times was 'Harold going to take that hedge?—how often was his uncle's head to drop forward on Brian's breast? He knew they were carrying him to Kincorth; for he could see Kathleen standing at the hall-door; and Jenny, too—Jenny, with a child in her arms; he and she were wandering through the glen. They could not get the cover of the will opened—the seals would not break. They need not mind—he could tell them what was in the codicil—he had got Ryan to add it. Yes, and he could let them into a secret about what would make ink look faded! What was that? Was the house falling? He was going up in the air—up—up—up; and then his mind ceased to wander—for he fainted.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

RYAN stood in the spot where Maxwell had left him until the riders were all gone—until the last red coat, the last groom, the last whipper-in, had disappeared from view; then, like a man rousing him from a dream, he moved slowly away, and took the hill-path towards Durrow.

Most men have some sense of honour—some point where, if you cut down deep enough, blood will spout out; and a woman's virtue was that sensitive place in Timothy Ryan.

To him it seemed that a woman should be pure as snow—that for her fame to be breathed on was for it to be sullied. He had his own ideal of what the sex should be; and that ideal was very lofty and very beautiful. Pretty well he knew what

men were; he knew more of their bad than of their good, perhaps; but women!

The angels were not purer or more holy than the generality of women, in Ryan's estimation; and one of the women whom he had loved, honoured, and adored, for many a year past, was his own sister, of whom Maxwell had asserted such things as made his very heart stand still.

But he did not believe it—he would not believe it unless her own lips condemned her. While he walked across the hills he kept saying this to himself, and then he would hurry on for a few steps, only again to stop and linger—linger by the way.

He sat down on blocks of granite, and pulled the grass and heather up by the roots, while he thought the matter over, till he went almost mad.

His own life had not been peculiarly honest or honourable. He had done many a dirty trick; he had helped Maxwell Drewitt to serve many a man a mean turn; he had not been scrupulous in the way of business; he had lent a hand at forging the codicil; he had given, or, rather, allowed Maxwell to take the second will.

He had not been at all nice as to what filth he put his hand into, and he had not felt many qualms of conscience in his life; but now, behold, there was a spot on his sister's robe, and he could not bear it; could not endure to think she had deceived him and her husband, and—and everybody, thought the poor fellow.

"I will not believe it," he ended. "I will go on; I will ask her about the matter, and then I will return to Kincorth and cram his words down his lying throat if there were a hundred people with him; for I will not believe Jenny could be bad—I will not—I will not."

It was easy enough to say this—easy enough to repeat the words over and over, over and over again—but, alas! the more he repeated them the less he believed them; the more surely conviction stole over his heart that Jenny had once fallen from her high estate; that Jenny was not pure, not innocent, not what he had fondly imagined his sister, and Connor's wife, and the mother of her children, to be—a woman as much above fear as beyond reproach.

Onwards towards Durrow, with the mountains to his right hand and the Atlantic to his left.

But Ryan never looked either to right or left; never looked, that is, noticing the hills or the sea. His heart was full to bursting. He had been a bad man, and an unscrupulous, and now the hour of reckoning was at hand. His health was ruined by drinking, his nerves were shattered, he had been unhinged by hearing of Mrs. Drewitt's death, and now it seemed to him as though sorrows were multiplying upon him, while he paused at intervals, and asked himself—

"What if it be true—what if he did not speak falsely after all?"

Mrs. Connor was alone, and sitting at work in one of the upper rooms, when her brother entered. He was a frequent visitor, so Jenny did not attach any importance to his coming till he had been seated for a few minutes, when, noticing the anxious, troubled expression of his face, she asked him what was the matter, whether anything was amiss.

"There is a good deal amiss, Jenny, that I want to talk with you about. Is Dennis out?"

"Yes, he has gone to Duranmore, I think. What is wrong, Timothy? Can I be of any use to

you? Is it money? Sure Dennis is always willing to lend to you when he has it. What is wrong? Tell me."

She had laid down her work, and was close beside him. She was a woman who never could grow old—who had such gentle, clinging ways, such loving, winning manners, that she was always to Ryan the young sister, the sweet Jenny whom he had once trembled might go off with Maxwell.

Once! what was that dread to this?

"It is not money, Jenny," he answered. "I wish to God it were! I have got many a thing to say to you. Go back to your chair, dear, and sit down. Let me see, where was I?"

"Going to tell me about this trouble that has come to you," she said. It never struck her it could be any trouble relating to her; she had been safe for so long. There were none alive that knew her secret who would reveal it; through the years it had never oozed out, and she did not imagine that after long years her sin could be brought to her remembrance by any human being.

"I have bad news, Jenny," he began, after a moment's hesitation. She sat with her hands

folded together in her lap, her eyes fixed on his face, her lips a little parted, and he felt he could not plunge into *that* question without leading up to it in some indirect manner. "I have bad news. Mrs. Drewitt is dead!"

"Dead!" Mrs. Connor repeated, and the slight colour faded out of her cheeks, and her eyes brimmed full of tears. "I am very sorry to hear it. She was a nice lady."

"And hardly done by."

"I am afraid she was. My heart was sore for her that night she came here after Mr. Drewitt's funeral. How did you hear about it, Timothy? did Mr. Brian write to Mr. Maxwell?"

"Mr. Brian will never write to Mr. Maxwell, and small blame to him for it. No, it was Mr. Murphy wrote to me, whatever possessed him—Murphy that used to be with Sheen, I mean, who was so sweet on you. He's a great man now, I believe. Somebody told me he was making two or three thousand a-year; but maybe it is not true."

"She did not stay long after Mr. Harold. I wonder if it was the fretting killed her."

"I don't know, I am sure—likely as not, for she

worshipped the ground he walked on. He was a fine lad."

"He was," answered Jenny, simply; "but I was fondest of Mr. Brian."

"Did you ever see anybody Harold favoured?" asked Ryan, suddenly.

"Never. Mr. Pryor always said he was the image of his cousin. I never could see it, though."

"Mr. Pryor was right; but there is another person who is more like Harold than his cousin ever was; that is, another person who must have been like Harold when he was Harold's age."

"Who is that?"

"Mr. Campnell, the young gentleman who was at Kincorth last autumn."

"I never saw him." But the colour came back into her cheek, and her eyes drooped under the look of eager, anxious inquiry her brother fixed upon her.

"Say that again, Jenny; say you never saw him."

"I never saw him," she repeated.

"Is it the truth you are telling me, or is it a lie?" He rose in his suspense and misery, and stood directly facing her.

"Why should I tell you a lie about the matter?" she asked. "What can Mr. Campnell be to me that I should fear to speak the truth? I never set eyes on him."

"And yet Maxwell Drewitt told me, not two hours ago, you were his mother?"

The work she had taken up again dropped from her fingers; she lifted her face to her brother's with a cry of helpless despair. Against any other testimony she might have maintained her innocence; but it was useless to attempt any further denial. Against him—false first and last—false as cruel—deceitful as relentless—there was no appeal.

"You need not speak, Jenny," he said; "you need not rack your brain to think what other falsehood you can coin to try and deceive me. I see it is all true. Oh! Jenny, Jenny."

She did not say a word—she could not say a word—she was so stunned, so confused, so wretched, that she could do nothing but sit and wonder if the misery of the past would all have to be endured over again; if she had not suffered enough then, that this fresh disgrace was come to her—that this blow had been dealt to her by *him*.

"I suppose this was the reason you would not marry for so long. I suppose this was what made you refuse offer after offer, and live on single till I'm sure I thought you never were going to be a wife at all. But though you deceived me, Jenny, I hope you did not deceive him. I hope you never let any honest man take you as you were, ignorantly."

She put out her hands, and there came such a look of horror into her white face as made Ryan turn round to see what could have caused it.

Behind him stood Connor, who, having heard the last part of his brother-in-law's sentence, asked hoarsely what they were talking about—what it all meant.

"It means, I ought never to have married you, Dennis," she broke out passionately. "It means, I am all he says, and worse. It means, that years, and years, and years ago I sinned, and that now my sin has found me out."

"What is it?" he repeated. "I do not understand it at all. Are you both mad? What is it, Tim? Tell me what she says."

"She says she is not what we both took her to be," answered Ryan, bitterly. "She confesses—

that—that boy Maxwell Drewitt has 'adopted' is her son, and his son, and their son."

"And God knows, Dennis, that many a time I would have given anything to have been able to tell you this—that when you have been telling me how happy—" the poor creature's voice was choked with sobs—"how happy you were, I felt my heart turn cold, thinking about my fault. I did not want to marry you, Dennis; you know I didn't. And I have been true and faithful to you since; and I was so young, and I am the mother of your children, and you have had every thought of my heart, and every bit of my love, since ever you took me home. Won't you forgive, Dennis?—sure you couldn't cast me off?"

She stretched out her arms towards him, but he made no step forward to take her to him. He averted his face that he might not look at the woman who had deceived him; who had lain in his bosom, and lived with him through the years, and borne him children, knowing what she knew about herself all the time.

"Dennis!" and she was going to fling herself at his feet, but her brother prevented her.

"Connor," he said, holding her back, and

standing resolutely between them, "I don't ask you—I can't ask you to keep her. She has brought shame and disgrace to both of us. She is no more to you now than if she had never been your wife; but she is my own sister just the same as ever; so I will e'en take her with me;" and suiting the action to the word, Ryan drew her arm within his and led her, spite of her struggles and remonstrances towards the door.

It was stern justice, stern and sharp, and Jenny rebelled against it.

"Let me go back to him," she said; "don't try to take me from him, Tim. He is not that hard —he will listen to me, and forgive me."

They had reached the door by this time, and one of her children, her youngest, came running along the passage, calling out "Mammy—Mammy."

At the words she fought to free herself, and succeeding, caught the little fellow to her heart and covered his face with kisses.

Very resolutely, Ryan took the boy from her and setting him down, said—

"Run away, Johnny, and play yourself; run away, you have no mother now;" and he drew his

sister's arm in his once more and walked on towards the head of the staircase.

This time Jenny made no effort to free herself; no struggle to return. With the full sense of her dishonour brought home by that one solitary sentence, she staggered forward, weeping bitter tears for her shame and their disgrace.

Weeping for a stain that the floods of Niagara could not have washed away; for hearts broken; for sin discovered; for confidence abused; for love betrayed!

So they descended the stairs together; she crying audibly; he weeping tears not to be noticed of men, but seen of God—tears not of brine from his eyes, but of blood from his heart.

So, clasping her hand closer and tighter, he guided her down step by step: he who had never forsaken her in joy or in sorrow—who was true to her in bad report as in good—who, reckless and unscrupulous and unprincipled though he might be in most things—who, fallen though he knew her to be, was her faithful brother still.

Step by step they descended that broad staircase; but when they reached the bottom, a hoarse voice called after them to stop; and Connor,

running down the flight, laid his hand on Jenny's shoulder.

"Give me my wife!" he said; "she has been a good wife to me, and you shall not take her from me. Jenny, haven't you loved me? haven't you been true to me since we came together? Only say that, and I won't mind the rest. I'll try to forget it, Jenny—I'll think it was a bad dream. There—there—darling; don't fret. I was stunned like for the minute; but I could not have let you go; no, I couldn't, dear, I couldn't."

Her arms were about his neck; her head was resting on his shoulder; her tears were falling like rain; and she was striving to articulate some words of thankfulness and blessing, when there was a trampling over the ground outside of many horses' hoofs, and of many men's feet; then a loud knocking; and then followed a scene of indescribable confusion.

"It was nearer to bring him here than take him to Kincorth. Shall we carry him up-stairs? He is not dead, though he is badly hurt. Who is it, d'ye say? It is Mr. Drewitt; who else? He was thrown just on the other side Durrow River; and the chesnut mare is killed."

"God help us!" exclaimed Connor.

"And we have sent for the doctor; and there's a heap of gentlemen outside there; and shall we take him up-stairs, or will you make him up a bed down here? That would be best, if you could do it."

"Where is he hurt?"

"Sorra a one of me knows," answered the man addressed; "he groaned that bad at first, I am sure you might have heard him up here; but he's fainted now, I think. Likely as not he won't get over it."

By this time several of the gentlemen had alighted and entered the house. From them Connor learned the particulars of the accident.

"The rest are gone after the fox," said Mr. Frost; "but I have had enough hunting for to-day; and so I think have my friends here. I never was more upset in my life."

Whereupon Mr. Connor suggested that a little whiskey might not be unacceptable; or "some wine," he added. "Mr. Pryor's Madeira is very good, I'm told."

"Let us have two or three bottles up, then. I should like to hear the doctor's opinion of Mr. Drewitt. I have been thinking since, that we

ought perhaps to have taken him to Kincorth; for I suspect he won't be able to move from here for many and many a day—unless, indeed, he is moved away in his coffin."

"Well, sir, we must only do our best for him, if he does stay," answered Connor, who could not, at such a time, remember his own injuries, or nurse his own anger.

Sickness, like death, is a great soother of human passions; and Maxwell Drewitt's state was for a long time sufficiently critical to render it doubtful whether he should ever leave Durrow again, except for his grave.

Day followed day—week succeeded to week—and month to month—but still Maxwell was unable to leave his bed. What he thought of, as he lay there, weak and faint and helpless, who can tell?—not even Jenny could imagine—though, judging by the words he let fall in his delirium, his reveries could scarcely, during convalescence, have been pleasant.

All through that illness he was nursed and tended by the people he had injured—by Ryan and Connor and Jenny; and that he ever recovered sufficiently to leave Durrow and return

to Kincorth, was owing more to their care and attention than to any other cause.

But Maxwell was not grateful for their kindness. I think he hated them all bitterly for thus heaping coals of fire upon his head. I believe he could have struck Ryan when he told him how he had kept forwarding money to Mr. Campnell, at that gentleman's request, without waiting for Mr. Drewitt's recovery, or troubling him on the subject till he should regain his strength.

"And in a letter I had from him the other day," proceeded the lawyer, "he says he wishes you would reconsider your decision and purchase him a commission, as he should prefer a soldier's life to any other."

"If he choose a soldier's life he must go as a private, and never look for a shilling from me," retorted Mr. Drewitt. "The boy is a fool, and he must be brought to his senses."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

ONCE again the summer sun was shining over Kincorth—brightly as on the day this story opened—and under the shadow of the overarching trees Maxwell Drewitt stood gazing up at the house just as he had done twenty-five years previously.

He was then three-and-twenty; he was now eight-and-forty: he was then full of youth and health and strength; he was now older than his age, a man stricken and feeble, who might never have a vigorous body or a sound constitution again. That fall, though it had failed to kill, had yet injured him permanently. He could know no more what it was to be free from ache and pain, to care nothing about the weather, to be insen-

sible to fatigue, to have an iron frame, an indomitable spirit.

A minute—less than a minute—had sufficed to make him a perfect wreck; a worn, sickly man, who, having formed no sweet home-ties for himself in the days of his strength, was now, in the time of his weakness, lonely and desolate.

Upon him the sunlight that streamed through the branches of the trees fell brightly, as they had fallen brightly, if you remember, five-and-twenty years before. He was starting on life's journey then; that journey was nearly over now.

He had planned then, he had hoped. The plans were now realities, the hopes certainties. He had longed to possess, and Kincorth was his. He had determined to be wealthy, and behold he had gold at his command. He had resolved to make the name of Drewitt notable, and the name of Drewitt had become remarkable. He had declared he would make the estate valuable, the property something to talk about, and in the length and breadth of Connemara there were not two lovelier places than Kincorth and Headlands. He had made up his mind to have his revenge, and uncle and aunt and youngest-born were all

gone to their graves, poor, and stricken, and sorrowful, while Brian was a clerk in London—Brian, who ought to have had Kincorth.

If success be happiness, Maxwell Drewitt should have been a man without a care; but the best-mounted horseman has as often that imp sitting behind him on the crupper as the poorest man riding on the shaggiest pony. Care, as a rule, indeed, loves high places, and care never left Maxwell Drewitt's side now by day or night.

Care for his own life; care for the man who was to come after him; care lest the winds of heaven might blow upon his own cheek too roughly; lest Arthur, the only thing he had on earth belonging to him, should go hopelessly astray.

He was doing no good at college; he was spending money as though he had an income of a thousand pounds a week; he was wild, he was reckless, he was intractable; and yet Maxwell, in his own fashion, loved him, perhaps on the same principle that a prisoner loves a rat; namely, because he had nothing else to care for.

And the youth knew this, and traded on it; winding the man who had never been weak before

round his finger as easily as Maxwell had wound others in the days gone by.

Of his son and of his health, Maxwell Drewitt was thinking while he stood under the trees, looking up at Kincorth. He felt that for him, life was over—life with its purposes, its hopes, its successes; and occasionally he could not help asking himself how it would be when not only the life of work was over, but the bare life—the living and breathing that would, he knew, continue after every capacity for exertion, every power of action had been taken from him.

House to house, acre to acre, property to property! for this end—to be standing with the best part of his existence—health—taken away from him; thinking in solitude of that unknown world concerning which the clergy preached continually; the secrets of which not one of the departed had ever returned to reveal.

The next world! There is a something very terrible to a man like Maxwell Drewitt in the idea of leaving all he has most enjoyed, most coveted, most valued, and going away to the cold and silent grave. He could not bear it; he shrank from the reality of death; he turned away from the grim

spectre; he fled from the unwelcome thoughts that would intrude themselves upon him. He could not bear to be alone; he would have anybody to sit with him rather than remain in solitude. He wished he had not quarrelled with his wife, and made overtures of reconciliation to her; but Lady Emmeline, now resident in London, refused his offers, and treated his advances with indifference and coldness.

He could not get Ryan to come and chat with him, and the evenings were frightful. He had no strength to endure the racket of company, and it was not likely that the men he knew would take pity on an invalid, and bear with his temper in sickness as they had borne with it in health.

The rector would have come; but Maxwell, after one or two trials, abandoned that experiment.

He thought of going away, but he did not know where to go, and, besides, it was in his nature to cling to his home and his country—to remain in the midst of the scenery he knew so well rather than take up his abode in the midst of a great city. He wished he had some one to stay always with him, always to speak to, always to have at his elbow, whom he could tell to drive away that demon who always would persist in reminding

him that the days were passing—passing; that there must come an hour when soul and body would have to be parted—when time would be the shadow, and eternity the substance.

If he had even Wilhelmina; but Wilhelmina and her husband and her children had sailed a year before for America. Susan was in the country—that is, in England; but then he had always hated Susan, and he had quarrelled fearfully with Captain, now Colonel, Ellenham about her fortune. When that individual, who had long been a widower, discovered that under Mr. Drewitt's will Susan was entitled to a small fortune, he married her forthwith; and over the matter of that fortune he and Maxwell had exchanged such letters as few people have inclination to send, or leisure to pen.

No, he had not a soul excepting his son; and his son would not consent to take up his abode permanently in Connemara—not, at any rate, until he had seen the world. He wanted to be an officer—he would be an officer; his father must purchase him a commission.

In his very last letter he repeated this statement, and expressed a wish that a remittance might be forwarded to him immediately.

"I must stop the supplies," Mr. Drewitt decided, as he walked away from under the trees, and retraced his steps towards the house slowly and painfully. "Yes, I must stop the supplies; that will bring him to his senses."

The next letter from his son announced that he had gone to London, and begged again for money. In reply, Maxwell referred him to his former letter, and desired him to return home.

During the week, Arthur wrote once more, and intimated that if "the needful," as he called it, were not forthcoming from Connemara, he must get it elsewhere, and in some mode which might be disagreeable to his father.

The tone of the correspondence was, by this time, waxing warm, and accordingly Mr. Drewitt answered—

"That for Arthur's own sake, he hoped he would get it honestly."

After that there came a lull; for a month there was not a line from this unrepentant prodigal, and Maxwell was getting most seriously anxious about his black sheep, when one morning the post brought two pleasant pieces of intelligence to him at the same time: news that his son had

enlisted and that the mutiny in India had broken out.

Arthur was very penitent, very submissive; he had seen quite enough of soldiering to satisfy him. He wanted to be bought off. If his father would but buy him off, he would do everything he required. He would settle in Connemara, and never ask to stir outside the gates of Kincorth, unless his father permitted him to do so. He would make it the study of his life to obey and please his parent; he would thankfully accept any conditions his father chose to impose. He confessed he had been a bad son; that considering his birth, he had not estimated Mr. Drewitt's kindness at its proper value, and he wound up by imploring his father to get him out of the service somehow.

"I have got into, perhaps, the very worst regiment I could have done," he finished, "and our colonel is one of the most detestable men, they tell me, in the whole of the British army. His name is Ellenham.

"Your affectionate son."

Maxwell dropped the letter on the carpet.

Were his troubles to have no end? Had he been prosperous for so long only that the tide might turn at last, and bring nothing but sorrow to him on its waves?

What had he done, that in middle life he should be stricken down in the pride of his health and strength?

Wherein did he now differ from the Maxwell of former years—that everything he touched in those days should have gone well with him—while nothing that he now desired would come to pass —nothing?

In a moment he had grasped all the facts of the case—in a moment he realized the complicated difficulties of his position. He knew, if Colonel Ellenham guessed Arthur to be his son, that he would throw such obstacles in the way of purchasing his discharge as might make that discharge impossible to obtain. He was well aware how much the war in India would increase his embarrassment; and he sat on, pondering and pondering what he should do—how it would be best for him to proceed, while his son's letter lay on the carpet and the newspaper was spread out before him.

Look at him now, reader. Would you know him? Remembering what he was when this story opened, would you have imagined it within the bounds of probability that—long before old age had laid its hand upon him—long before winter's withering frosts had come to pick the green leaves off the goodly tree—to dry up its sap, to strip it of its beauty, and to leave it bare and destitute of foliage, almost in the summer of his life—he could have changed to this?

Sitting alone there, the terrible ravages sickness and pain had made were plainly to be traced; and, with Maxwell Drewitt, when once his physical beauty was destroyed, everything was destroyed; and he who had once been so haughty—so insolent—so handsome—was now but as any other bowed and beaten man.

And in that hour he was humbling himself mentally—he was bending his proud spirit to ask a favour from a man whom he detested. He only knew one person in London who would, he felt sure, work for his son's release heart and soul—and that person was Geoffry Pryor.

Yet Geoffry Pryor had read him through in the days gone by; and, reading him, had

refused his proffered hand, and never grasped it since.

Nevertheless, it was to him Maxwell Drewitt made up his mind to apply.

"I will send Ryan to Dublin by this night's mail," he decided; "and he can cross to Holyhead to-morrow morning."

Sickness had not dulled the keen brain, though it had wasted and worn his body. He could think rapidly, though it was pain and misery to him to move swiftly. He could still chalk out a plan, and make others act upon it, though the days were gone for ever when he could execute his designs himself and be dependent on no other man living to see that they were carried out to his satisfaction.

"Do you think I had better follow you?" he inquired; but Ryan answered, "No. I am certain, if any person can get him off, Mr. Pryor will find that man; and you will only knock yourself up by going travelling in such hot weather as this. No; you keep yourself quiet, and rely on us. I will do my best—if only for *her* sake—be sure of that."

Yes, they were all rowing in the same boat now. Ryan could never disassociate his interests from

Maxwell, nor Maxwell his from Ryan in the future for ever.

The comparison may not seem complimentary to the married state; but in one respect guilt is very like matrimony. Whether people like or hate, they must endure each his fellow's company when once they have bound themselves together in the bonds of sin.

It is as difficult for rogues to get a divorce as for husband and wife; and accordingly what Maxwell and Ryan had been in the beginning, so they continued to the end.

"I had better ride to Galway, I suppose," Ryan observed; "there is no dependence to be placed on those post-horses."

"Nonsense," answered his employer. "The mail-car can take you as safely as the letters, I should imagine."

"I won't risk it," returned Ryan; "there might not be a vacant seat."

"And how about your luggage?"

"The car can bring a carpet-bag after me; there is sure to be room for that."

"One word more, Ryan. Don't let him out of your sight; bring him straight back with you here,

till we try if we cannot make something of him. I wish to heaven he was as wise as he is handsome!"

"He'll never be wise, I'm right sure of that," was the reply; "but I will do what you tell me. I will bring him back to you." And with that Ryan left the room, while Maxwell remained fuming over his last words.

"What right had any man to say his son would never be wise? Was not he clever enough? was not he young? If he had gone wrong once, what of that? He should be a credit and a comfort to him yet. Once let him (Maxwell) have him back again in Connemara, and he would look him out a wife who should keep him in order, and give him an interest in the county.

"Many a girl would snap at such a chance, and he, Maxwell, could take the opportunity of making a proviso that his heir should assume the name of Drewitt.

"It would be pleasant for him to have his son and his son's wife living in the house, and the chatter of children's tongues and the patter of children's feet might yet break the funereal silence of the empty rooms, by the doors of which he dreaded to pass."

Always this man had longed for children, and now, with a more terrible longing than ever, he desired to hear young voices ringing in his ears—to have something lively and bright to chase away the gloom that was enveloping him.

With all his heart and with all his soul he wished he had brought Arthur home sooner; that he had insisted years and years before on having him at the Headlands, instead of leaving him among strangers.

He recollected why he had not done so. How he had calculated on Lady Emmeline's death, and on his second marriage, and on the chances of legitimate issue.

The scroll of his life could not have been pleasant reading in the days of which I am now writing, and it was little marvel that Maxwell Drewitt opened that manuscript as seldom as possible.

Rather he preferred to dream dreams, and see visions; to picture to himself the young wife who would make the old house seem home-like and cheerful, the children who might gambol on the lawn.

Dreams—dreams—sad and pitiful to think that they could never be realized! visions so bright

that when the disillusion came the man whose life was almost over could not bear the blow!

It was on himself he had built before; it was on another he was building now: that made all the difference. He had been always able to tell what course he should pursue; but the course his son might adopt was darkness to him.

One of the children of this world, he had been wise in his generation; one of the fools of this world, there was no counting upon what Arthur might do from day to day.

And what he finally did was this:—

While Mr. Pryor, after vainly trying to come to some arrangement with Colonel Ellenham, was running after one great man after another, to try to procure Arthur's discharge, that young gentleman, wearied of the ill-success attendant on his friend's efforts, coolly did the most foolish thing possible under the circumstances, namely, took the matter into his own hands and deserted.

"That I ever should have been father to such an idiot!" exclaimed Maxwell Drewitt when the news reached him. "There is no hope for him now, unless we can discover where he is and get him out of the country."

And even, in fancy, he never again heard the chatter of children's tongues or the patter of children's feet; the lonely rooms he could fill no more, even in dreams, with light and life and merriment.

Deeper and darker grew the night, lonelier and more desolate grew the man—sad and pitiful! sinner that he had been—for the days were come at last when he said he had no pleasure in them. He had thought to live long, and to have much enjoyment, and behold he found out in a moment that what Solomon said was true: "Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them."

CHAPTER X.

MAN'S VENGEANCE.

THE world had prospered with Brian Drewitt since his mother's death; his salary was still indeed not excessive, but he was promised an increase very shortly, and Mr. Francis Gyton had further thrown out many vague hints to the effect that in his, Frank Gyton's opinion, it would be far jollier if they (he and Brian) were to cut the old connection, and start in business on their own account.

"I know I could not stand Munday, so there is no use in my father talking of taking me into partnership," he said one evening when he and Brian were walking up westward together from the City. "I think such a lot of partners are a damned nuisance, and I should like to get clear of them. So, to cut the matter short, Brian, when-

ever I am married I should like to commence with you. I can find the tin, and you the brains—is it a bargain?"

"Your father?" hesitated Brian.

"My father will be a little restive at first, but when he is tired of opposition he will give in, and it is of no use mincing the matter, Brian; Mr. Munday and I cannot remain in the same business together. What do you say—will you be my man, or will you not?"

"I will not, without speaking first to your father in the matter. He has been very kind to me, and——"

"And you will do the respectful and all the rest of it, and I will do the dutiful; so that, between us, the old gentleman will be as easily managed as possible. I should not wonder if he came over to us himself, for he likes Munday no better than I do."

Mrs. Drewitt's death had of course postponed Geraldine's marriage, and as it had also crippled their means, brother and sister were now living in a cottage at Highgate, which Mr. Gyton entertained some idea of purchasing for his son.

"Throw out a drawing-room there, and build a

conservatory here, and put the kitchens at the back, and it would really make a very charming little residence. Love in a cottage, eh, Geraldine?"

Whereupon Geraldine blushed and laughed, while the evening sunshine fell upon her.

"And you will require coach-house and stabling; in fact, the whole place will need alteration; but it is a lovely situation—lovely!" and the great man stood back to admire the view. "I tell you what it is, Miss," he went on; "I shall get so fond of this cottage one of these days, that you will have me taking up my abode here," and he pinched the girl's cheek, who, passing her hand through his arm, said coaxingly—

"Something has taken up its abode here that would astonish you. I wonder if I might tell you, or whether you would be shocked. It is a deserter, a countryman of my own."

"A deserter?—you are jesting, Geraldine."

"I am not jesting at all," she answered. "Our servant found him in the wood-shed, this morning, and he is half-starved, and badly clad, and ill and miserable."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Gyton.

"And I want your help to send him over to

America, or Newfoundland, or some place," added Geraldine, with that charming ambiguity of expression which is so pleasing a characteristic of her sex.

"But—but—but all this is very illegal; extremely improper," began Mr. Gyton.

"We don't care for law at all in Ireland," answered Geraldine, demurely; "and in such a case as this, not much for propriety."

"You incorrigible little girl, I don't know what I must say to you."

"Say you will pay his passage out to America," she suggested. "If I had the money, I would do it in a minute."

"But it is against law: the proper course for you to pursue, would be to go down to Scotland Yard, and give information that such and such a person was concealed on your premises."

Geraldine broke out into a peal of laughter. "Should you really like me to go to Scotland Yard, Mr. Gyton?" she suggested. "Would a note not do as well, or could Frank not call round in the morning? Is there any reward? I think I should like to get a reward."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Lady

Emmeline, who was likewise of the party. "I declare, any person might think it was you and Mr. Gyton who were engaged, instead of you and Frank."

"So we are engaged for life, as father and daughter," replied the millionaire; "we were talking about a deserter. Geraldine, it appears, keeps one among her coals and wood."

"You are not serious?"

"Perfectly serious. I dare say the young man is on view at the present moment."

"Dear me! how romantic!"

"It is romantic," added Geraldine; "for he is evidently a gentleman; he has been to Oxford, at the University, I mean—a student there, or whatever you call it."

"I think, Mr. Gyton, that this affair ought to be investigated," said Lady Emmeline.

"I think so, too," was the reply. "Suppose we send for a policeman?"

"If a policeman come here I will smash his skull for him!" remarked Brian, at this juncture.

"Dear! dear! what a set of people you Irish are!" observed Mr. Gyton. "A man has only to shoot his landlord—or be a rebel—or a deserter

—or something of that kind, to engage all your sympathies!"

"You would not have us give him up?" exclaimed Brian, his voice sounding loud and angry, as he spoke.

"Certainly not, sir. To an Englishman I might suggest such a course; but to an Irishman—never. The proper thing for you to do, is to feed him, clothe him, love him, and then send him over to America, to hate the English, and say we are the cause of all Ireland's misfortunes."

For the life of him, Brian could not help laughing. The sketch was so true—so real and so ready.

"Could not we get a peep at him?" asked Lady Emmeline.

"Certainly," answered Brian; "at five pounds a head."

"Is he worth the money, Lady Emmeline, do you consider?" inquired Mr. Gyton.

"Now, how can one possibly tell that unless one sees him?" demanded Lady Emmeline. "You really must allow us some discretion, Brian."

"As much as you please," Brian answered, "if you give me five pounds."

"Is it as a charity?" inquired her ladyship.

"As a charity," Brian replied, bowing low.

"Then there is my five pounds," said Lady Emmeline, putting five sovereigns into Brian's hand.

"And five pounds for me and five for my wife," added Mr. Gyton.

"You won't charge me anything, Brian? I am one of the family," said Mr. Francis Gyton.

"And well able to afford to pay for the sight," added Brian.

"What a leech you are! Won't my I O U do as well? Won't you trust me? 'Pon my honour, I have not five pounds about me."

"I will pay for him," said Geraldine, drawing out her purse; "but remember, Frank, it is out of my housekeeping money; so you must give it back to me honestly."

And thus, amidst much laughing, they collected twenty pounds, on the strength of which the deserter was brought by Brian into the little parlour of Spring Lodge.

"Well, but really now, you know—joking apart, excuse me, but, my good fellow, this is really very irregular," remarked Mr. Gyton, senior.

"I suppose no one can know that better than he," said Brian, looking at the thin pale face, the hollow cheeks, the unshaved chin, the gristly moustache, with an interest he could neither have explained nor defined.

"And where do you come from?" asked Frank Gyton.

"From Yorkshire," was the reply; "that young lady (indicating Geraldine) will have it that I am from Ireland, but she is mistaken."

"No, I am not," answered Geraldine. "No Englishman ever pronounced 'have it'—'haf't'—as you do."

"What is your name?" inquired Mr. Gyton.

"Ward," he said; "Charles Ward."

"It is not," exclaimed Lady Emmeline; "it is Campnell, and you are Mr. Maxwell Drewitt's illegitimate son."

"Do you know him?" asked Brian, hurriedly.

"Know him? To be sure I do. Didn't I see him in Connemara last year? Have not you noticed the likeness between him and Harold?"

In a moment Brian comprehended what had attracted him about the deserter. In an instant he formed his plans. The hour of vengeance was

striking at last, and it would be his own fault if he faltered in his design.

Through Maxwell's son he must hurt Maxwell; and soon after he rose, and left the room.

While they were all talking together, speaking to Arthur Campnell, asking him how he chanced to enlist, how he came to desert, Geraldine left the room likewise. She searched all over the house, she made inquiries of the servants, their own, and Mr. Gyton, and Lady Emmeline's. None knew where Brian had gone; but one man had seen him go out of the gate, and walk down the hill.

"Tell Mr. Gyton I want him," Geraldine said; "not Mr. Frank, but Mr. Gyton." And Mr. Gyton came out. "Brian is gone to give information," she said; "we must get him away, and at once."

"Geraldine, you are dreaming," exclaimed Mr. Gyton.

"Am I? You don't know Brian as well as I do. So long as he thought that man was simply a deserter, he would have died before letting a hair of his head be touched; but now he knows him to be Maxwell's son, he would put a rope round his neck, and hang him."

"God bless my soul! you don't say so!"

"I do say so," she answered; "and I say you know nothing of the Irish, whose hate is as strong as their love. I noticed his face change, the moment Lady Emmeline said who Arthur was, and I know he must be got away from here without a moment's delay."

"But really, that is. you know——"

"Take him to Mr. Pryor; he will see to him—he will get him off," said Geraldine. And accordingly, greatly to his disgust, Mr. Gyton was persuaded to drive off, with a deserter in his carriage personating Frank.

"And now, Geoffry," added Mr. Gyton, when he had finished his narrative, "let me entreat of you to get him away as soon as possible. He is no credit to the family; and one really cannot get through life respectably, if deserters, and so forth, are to be hidden in our coal-cellars and larders. Really, Mr. Maxwell Drewitt ought to have more consideration," he continued; but Mr. Pryor smiled.

"Maxwell Drewitt does not know what to do with this boy, whom he means to make his heir. It is a lamentable business altogether; but, as you say, there is nothing for it except to get him to

Ireland, and out of the country as soon as possible."

"I did not think Brian would really have informed," remarked Mr. Gyton.

"It would be hard to say what he might, or what he might not do, where his cousin is concerned," was the reply.

"And with regard to this youth?"

"Leave him to me."

Meanwhile, there were high words waging at Highgate between Geraldine and her brother.

She was accusing him of meanness, cowardice, vindictiveness.

He retorted by saying she was cold, insensible, heartless.

"Indifferent to our mother's sufferings — to Harold's disgrace."

"Our mother, on her death-bed, said, that you were to forgive, as you hoped to be forgiven," answered Geraldine.

"You should not talk about what you do not understand, Geraldine," he said.

"I understood that well enough," she replied; "and I know that long letter she wrote to you was full of nothing else but regrets for ever having

encouraged your dislike of Maxwell, and not having checked your desire for revenge."

"She was an angel."

"She was."

"Who never could carry a feeling of resentment; and therefore it behoves me—I tell you, Geraldine, it behoves me to remember her wrongs, and have no mercy."

"That is not what she would tell you, Brian, if she were alive. But there is no use in our arguing this point out now, for Maxwell's son is now beyond the reach of your vindictiveness."

"Are you quite satisfied of that?"

"Yes, I am. Oh, Brian! do not push this matter further. Think if it had been Harold!—and he is so like Harold."

"So was the lad who stole those notes."

"Do you think it was he that took them?"

"Think!" he repeated, contemptuously; "I am sure of it. What is your opinion of your protégé, now?"

There was a long pause, during the continuance of which Geraldine sat weeping silently. At last, she said—

"Brian, do you imagine it would comfort

Harold to know you were pursuing that young man for his sake?"

"It comforts me," he replied.

"Now, when he is gone where his innocence is known, what can it matter to him who goes free on earth?"

"It matters to his memory, Geraldine."

"And who cares for his memory? who but a few that, believing him innocent in life, cannot doubt him in death?"

"We need not talk any further about the matter," said Brian, angrily. "I am doing what I consider right; and no one shall convince me to the contrary."

"I think I could," said Mr. Pryor, who, late though the hour was, entered at the moment. "Brian, you have done very wrong!"

"I have not!" was the answer.

"I told you yourself, years ago, you were preparing a bitter cup; but you would not listen to my warning. That youth was safe here. No one would have suspected his being concealed in such a house as this; and we could easily have shipped him off from here to some place of safety. Now, I candidly say, I do not know what we are to do.

Every plan seems beset with danger and difficulty!"

"I am glad to hear it," remarked Brian, sullenly.

"No, Brian, you are not. Vindictive though you may be, you could not in cool blood—you could not, I am sure—give that boy over to be flogged and branded!"

"I could! believing, as I do, that his father will feel every lash and every touch of the iron through him."

"And his mother, Brian?"

"The mother of such a son must be as bad as his father."

"She is not! I know her well; and I know she is not! Shall I tell you her name, Brian?"

"It can have no interest for me," he answered; "but you may tell me, if you like."

"Mrs. Connor!"

"No!" Brian started to his feet. "No! I tell you it is not—it shall not be!"

"How can you prevent it? the fact is so. Mrs. Connor, when she was Jenny Bourke—young, pretty, guileless—brought that boy into the world,

whom you have tried your best this night, Brian, to give up to trial and punishment."

"Mr. Pryor, God is my witness! I thought I was only doing my duty!"

"Duty towards whom?"

"To my mother's memory—to Harold's! For myself and Geraldine, I do not care—I never have cared; but no soul can give *them* any comfort or happiness here. And I vowed—I swore—if ever I could pay Maxwell back any portion of the suffering he had caused them, I would do so."

"Did not your mother leave some parting message for you—some words that must have sounded as though uttered from her coffin?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"She did," was the reply; "but though she might forgive for herself, I did not think myself bound to comply with her request and forgive for her. So long as we are in the flesh we must act like men; and it is not like a man to forgive and forget such injuries as Maxwell heaped on us."

"Brian, do you think it is our affair to manage the world—to avenge wrongs, to requite the virtuous and punish the wicked?"

"How can I tell?" he answered. "I suppose we are instruments; and when one sees a man like Maxwell prosperous, happy, respected, what is one to do—how is one to act?"

"Not as you have done, at any rate; we are all so mixed up here, that if we strike a blow we never can tell whose heart may feel the wound most severely. As in this case, for instance, you never guessed Mrs. Connor could be mixed up in such a matter."

"Well, the young fellow is gone," answered Brian, impatiently; "he is not caught, I suppose; and wherever Geraldine sent him, I conclude he is safe enough."

"Is he? there were inquiries at my house not half an hour ago, and if I had not been quicker than they suspected the boy would have been now on his way back to barracks."

Brian made no answer; he sat for a long time silent, for many minutes he never spoke one word; then he rose and left the room in silence.

"He is sorry," Geraldine remarked; and Geraldine was right. Brian was gone away, to mourn in solitude; not that he had tried to punish Maxwell's son, but that Maxwell's son was also Jenny's boy—

poor Jenny, to whom he had once vowed to be grateful for life.

Next morning Ryan and his nephew started for Ireland; proceeding thither, not by the Dublin and Holyhead route, but running down by the Great Western to Milford Haven, whence they crossed to Waterford; from which place Mr. Ryan meant to work their way by all manner of curious routes to Connemara.

"Once there we shall be safe," thought Mr. Ryan; but he reckoned without his host.

"I wonder if they have reached Kincorth?" Mr. Pryor remarked, the day but one after their departure, to Brian, who had never opened his lips on the subject from the night he discovered who the deserter really was until that present moment.

"If who have reached Kincorth?" asked the younger man.

"Ryan and his nephew."

"They have not gone to Ireland, surely—they have not been so mad as that?" exclaimed Brian, all in a hurry and tremble.

"Why not? it seemed to me a much safer place than London."

"But I told them whose son he was—they are certain to be on the look-out. Why did you say nothing to me—oh! why did not you?"

They were walking down the Holloway Road at the moment, and Mr. Pryor, without answering Brian by a word, called a passing Hansom, and jumped in.

"Where are you going?" asked Brian.

"I am going to Lothbury, to the Telegraph Office, to stop your work, if I can."

"Let me go with you."

"No;" and Mr. Pryor banged the door of the Hansom and was off.

Brian had never seen him angry before, never out of temper; and as he stood there alone on the edge of the broad pavement, between the Seven Sisters Road and the railway bridge, he began to feel that he had indeed done more evil than he could readily undo, that he had let his revenge get the better not merely of his charity but of his prudence, and that unless he could give some assistance in the matter he should feel wretched for life.

Wretched for life! Did he know the meaning of the words he was whispering to his own soul?

had he other than the vaguest comprehension of the misery he had wrought both for others and himself?

Flogged—branded! Somehow he derived no sort of satisfaction from the idea of his enemy being punished now.

He had kept his pebble and turned it, taken it out and slung it, and struck his foe in the very place where it had delighted him to think the blow would take effect. But now that it had taken effect—now that his enemy was worsted, that his pebble was gone out of his own keeping, that he had taken his own way, and revenged himself at once on the man who had cast them out of Kincorth, and the boy who had damaged Harold's character past repair—he could not help asking himself what good there was likely to come of it all to her, or him, or them.

To him or her? Should he go up to the churchyard sloping towards the west and tell the earth how he had taken one step forward to the end he had laid out for himself? Should he whisper to the dead that he had made the living wretched for their sakes? Should he tell the wind that stirred the grass growing green on Harold's grave how

the delinquent was at last discovered, how he had set the officers of justice on his track? Would not the dead be gratified; could not he make them hear that; would not the words bring them back to life? Had not he well obeyed his mother's dying injunction, that he should forgive as he hoped to be forgiven; and from the heavens would she not look approvingly at the base act of vindictive hatred of which he had been guilty?

Dimly as he walked along all this passed through his mind; vaguely he began to see he had chosen the wrong path, that others had been right, that he had been wrong. Somewhere he had heard of a better way of avenging oneself upon an enemy than by branding and scourging, of a way which did not raise every feeling of a man's heart into ten times worse hatred and antagonism, but which instead "heaped coals of fire upon his head." Nothing he could do—nothing—nothing for ever might comfort or soothe the departed: the "dull cold ear of death" could hearken to no words that it was in his power to frame: if he killed Maxwell and laid his body on their graves, what could it profit them? Could he bring them back again? and if he could, oh God! if he could, would it not

be awful to see them rise up and rejoice because their enemy was brought low?

Very speedily Brian made up his mind he would follow Mr. Pryor, hear what he had done, and then, if need were, start that night for Ireland.

He might be of some use, he might be able to render some assistance; and "I declare to you, Mr. Pryor," he said, "that if I could retrace my steps I would; if I could take that night back and act my part in it over again, I would not do one thing I have done, not one."

"Even a savage would not have been so treacherous, so inhospitable," answered Mr. Pryor.

"I know it," was the reply; "but are we always able to argue out such questions coolly? Does the man live who has never believed he has seen clearly walking through the darkness?"

CHAPTER XI.

THROUGH CONNEMARA.

MAXWELL DREWITT sat alone in the dining-room at Kincorth, waiting for his son; he had waited many days and yet the fugitive came not, neither had any tidings of Arthur reached him.

He had watched for the post, he had strained his ears to catch the sound of horses' feet, the noise of coming wheels. He had risen early, and gone to bed late; he had lain through the night wakeful and restless, and still there arrived no tidings; he had no data to go upon except Mr. Pryor's telegram which he held in his hand.

Sorrow had told upon him; the suspense, the agony, the alternations of hope and fear had broken him down more and more. He was old—old and stricken; and as he crouched over the fire, which a

damp autumnal evening had rendered acceptable, I think a more hopeless picture of the vanity of human wishes, of the end of human desires, could not have been presented for consideration.

Where was the erect carriage, the bold, defiant glance, the indolent grace of movement, the insolent overbearing manner? Gone, friends, gone —like the raven hue of his own glossy hair; like the cold brightness of his eyes; like the beauty he had been proud of, and that women had been won by; gone—gone for ever.

The passionless sneer had left his lips and given place to a sort of irrepressible convulsion. He could not walk now as he had walked in former years along the shore of Duranmore Bay, kicking the pebbles before him; but when at last he arose from his chair, in order to make his way to one of the windows, he had to support himself with a stick and to catch at chairs and tables as he passed by.

It was a wild night; the equinoctial gales were blowing their fiercest, and Maxwell, standing leaning against the window-frame, thought of how the waves must be lashing up against Eversbeg Head; how the billows must be raging and tossing outside the bay.

There was a something so dreary in the idea of that limitless ocean; those thousands of miles of tempestuous waters; that great expanse of sea without an island, without a shore, without a rock; those great deeps, shouting under the night to one another, while the floods clapped their hands—that Maxwell could not bear it; he had to turn from the window, and make his way feebly to the hearth, and stir up the fire, and try to think of a more cheerful subject.

But what cheerful subject had he to think of—this man, who had lived for the midday, and not for the night?

He could think of his boy, but of nothing else—of his boy, who, all unknown to him, was fleeing through Connemara towards Kincorth; who was trying to outstrip his pursuers, whom Ryan had promised to mislead, if possible, at Oughterard.

Through the night he was riding as if for his life; while the wind howled down among the mountains and through the valleys, and washed the waters of the lakes over the low stone walls that are in some places all that separates them from the highway—he rode on.

He had lost his hat about six miles on the

Duranmore side of Oughterard, and now, as he galloped through the darkness, the wind tossed his hair hither and thither, now leaving his forehead bare, and again blinding him with locks that were dead-black as Harold's had been. On—on—without a pause, except when the steepness of the ground necessitated pulling up his horse and walking—on past the giant mountains; past the eternal lakes; past the long low line of hills that lay between him and the sea; past bogs and morasses; over mountain-streams, over brawling torrents—still on through the darkness towards Kincorth.

Having gained the Calgillan road, he dismounted, unfastened his girths, took the saddle off his good steed's back, and the bridle off his head, and then turned the animal adrift. Saddle and bridle he carried till he reached the plantations of Kincorth, when he left the main road, and hiding his belongings deep in the underwood, made his way across the fields towards the house.

"They are after me, father," were his first words; "but I have got the start. Mr. Ryan said you were not to keep me here, but forward me on to Durrow. I don't know my way there."

He stood in the centre of the room while he

spoke, with the firelight flickering over his pale face, with his straight hair tangled and matted, with a weary, anxious look on his countenance, with a hunted expression in his dark eyes.

"Who let you in?" Maxwell asked. It was no time for the interchange of much ceremony—for many words to be wasted.

"Dickson; and I have warned him."

"Go into the next room for a minute while I ring the bell. Bring wine," Maxwell ordered, "and, Dickson, come here for a moment."

"Yes, sir."

"Is Flynn gone?"

"He leaves at six, you know, sir, usually, and it is now eleven."

"Could you put the roan horse in the car?"

"Yes, sir."

"The other servants are gone to-bed, I suppose?"

"All, except the cook, sir."

"Take the horse and car round to the back avenue, and then sit up for me. If anybody comes here asking where I am, say I have gone to Lord Marsden's to dinner, and will not be back till late—perhaps not till morning, and—and—you know the rest, Dickson."

"Yes, sir. I am to say Mr. Arthur has not been here."

"Now go. Of course you will sit up for me. Should there be danger, light a candle in the blue room, and I will be on my guard; you understand?"

"Perfectly, sir. But surely you are not going out to-night; excuse me, sir, but——"

"Necessity knows no law," finished Maxwell Drewitt, with something of his old decision of manner. "Now, Arthur, drink some wine, to put life into you; for it may be many a night before you are able to put your head under a roof again." And while his son followed his advice in silence, the wretched father sat and looked at the only child he ever had.

"Surely you are not coming with me?" said Arthur, as his father arose and intimated it was time for them to depart. "It is an awful night, cold, and bleak, and threatening for rain. Let me try to find my way alone, if you would rather not trust Dickson."

"I am not afraid of trusting Dickson," was the reply; "but I must leave some one to answer their inquiries should they come." Arthur shud-

dered; too well he knew who *they* meant. "And as for the night, I shall be better out; the cold air will not hurt me."

Would not it? He knew better; but he knew, also, that anything would be preferable to remaining at home in suspense; and, besides, after all, whom could he trust so well as himself—who could keep the secret like he and Arthur?

Through the night they pressed on together—father and son.

As they drove along that interminable road towards Durrow, Maxwell could not help thinking, that at some previous time he had traversed it under circumstances similar to the present; and all at once, as they drew near Castle Cronach, he remembered what Mr. Gyton had said about riding for one's life through Connemara; and about how a man who was doing so would curse those bends and twists and curves.

There are some things which impress us with such a sense of reality—with such a feeling that at a future day we shall pass through what we fancy then—as gives us the idea, when the future day arrives, that we have not prefigured the event, but that it has actually happened at some former period.

This was Maxwell's state of mind, at all events; and as the keen wind swept by—as the rain began pattering in his face—as he felt the nipping night air blowing through and through him, he could not help occasionally marvelling which was the dream, and which the reality—which was the shadow, and which the substance. Had he ever ridden along that road with three companions? Was he driving it in very truth then? Had he ever been strong enough to ride? Was he only imagining he was driving now? Were there people following them? Did he hear the sound of horses' hoofs behind?

"It is only the wind," Arthur kept saying; but Maxwell lashed the roan on for all that.

How long the road was! How he did curse those curves! how he did anathematize the engineer who planned, and the men who made it! How every winding seemed to double itself in length! how every mile appeared to quadruple itself in distance! But there, at last, thank God! at last, was Durrow!

They soon knocked Mr. Connor up, and explained to him the state of the case.

"You are on good terms with the fishermen,

Connor," said Mr. Drewitt; "get Skerritt to stow Arthur away till he can be taken off in some smuggling craft. Make it all right with the men; and say, I don't mind five hundred pounds when I hear he is safe in France. It is more than you are worth, boy," he added. "Don't you think, now, you have been more trouble than profit to me, all your life long?"

His voice shook and trembled as he spoke; and Mr. Connor drew back, knowing they were about to say farewell to one another.

"It will be safest for us to leave you in their hands entirely," explained Mr. Drewitt; "I am not afraid of any informers among them. Write to me, when you get clear off. You will have money and clothes provided for you on board the vessel. If I can, I will join you in France; but do not attempt to come back to these countries. And now good-bye, for the present. Good-bye!"

He held out his hand—he had never been much given to caressing, and it was the only mode of leave-taking he knew; but Arthur fell on his neck and wept; and Maxwell felt those tears dropping down into his heart, one by one.

It had been a cold heart and a dead—it had

lain numb through life, only to waken up with pain and grief towards the last; and now he felt not only his son's tears softening him, but the memory of other tears he had seen flow—of other sobs he had heard in the night—of other anguish he had let go away unsoothed—came up before him then—the ghosts of dead realities, the shadows of things that had all, once been.

A few seconds and it was over; that was no time at which to waste precious moments in grief or in adieux; and while Connor took Arthur with him down to the shore, Maxwell drove back to Kincorth through the night alone.

That seemed to be his doom—alone—alone for ever—in adversity as in prosperity—at the end as in the beginning. But in the beginning solitude had not seemed terrible as it did towards the end; and that fact made all the difference.

Through that desolate wilderness he drove back, as I have said, alone; past great stretches of country, across which the wind went howling and howling as though, with shrieks and laughter, the storm were running races over the flat tracts of moorland. For a little distance the road wound along by the side of Durrow River, where the

chesnut had died taking her leap so gallantly, and then great mountains hemmed him in for a mile or so, when they swept grandly off to right and left, leaving the traveller breathing space once more.

It is a grand country, this Connemara, but desolate beyond all power of description; the ends of the world seem to be reached when you are journeying through it; and even when a person has no pressing care, no special cause for unhappiness, when he is strong and free from anxiety of mind, there is a weirdness and a solemnity about a night-ride through this part of that land of the Wild West which must be felt to be comprehended.

What, then, must that solitary drive have proved to Maxwell Drewitt, whose strength was turned into weakness, whose powers of endurance were not equal to such an undertaking—who, racked with mental and bodily pain, prostrated by physical suffering, fancied, now that the mountains were advancing towards him—now that the road was slipping away—now that the air was full of strange sounds—and again that through the valleys and up the defiles were coming hundreds and hundreds of armed men seeking after his son?

It was fortunate that the roan knew his way to his stable, knew every turn in the road, every point of danger, every awkward curve, the position almost of every block of granite, or else Maxwell could scarcely have guided him home.

As it was, between two and three o'clock in the morning, when the wind was a little lulled, and the rain coming down in torrents, the unhappy man reached Kincorth, and lifting his eyes instinctively to the windows, saw no light in them.

"You must be just drowned, sir," said Dickson, as he helped him off the car and took the reins out of his trembling hand and assisted him into the house; "I have a good fire in your own room, sir, and you had better get off your wet things and go straight away to bed."

"Who is that, Dickson, who is that?" Maxwell whispered, seeing that a man had taken the horse's head and was leading him round towards the stables. "There was no light burning—who is it?"

"No one, sir, but Mr. Brian Drewitt, who came in not ten minutes after you left. He said he would put up the roan, and set everything right for the morning, so that I could stay with you. He

seems dreadfully downhearted, and he hasn't put bite nor sup in his lips since he entered the doors."

"Go to him, Dickson, and tell him not to lay a finger on any horse of mine; tell him that he shall not stay in my house, nor meddle in my concerns. It is owing to him that my son is a fugitive this night, without a place to lay his head in. He has come to gloat over me, to exult in my defeat; but he shall not stay here; he shall not, by——!"

Very unceremoniously, Dickson marched his master off to bed.

"I don't think, sir," he answered, "that you rightly know what you are talking about. I never saw a young gentleman seem in less notion of exulting, as you call it, than that same Mr. Brian was to-night; and I am certain sure if Mr. Arthur had been his own brother he could not have appeared more cut up than he was. When you're warm in your bed, just see him, and hear what he has got to say; and if you don't think then he means fair, why tell me to put him out, and if I don't do it my name is not Michael Dickson. And sure, is not he making himself of use at this very minute, washing the car and rubbing down the horse, and doing a stable-boy's work, only better

than any stable-boy ever did it? I know what Mr. Brian can do. Many a time when I used to be coming up here, I saw him at work just like a labourer. Let him stay, sir, let him stay; we'll want him yet."

"It was he gave the information," muttered Maxwell.

"So he told me; and he told me why he did it, and how sorry he had been since. He talked to me for an hour in the dining-room there—for an hour at the least. And he spoke about his mother, and Mr. Harold, so that it would have melted the heart of a stone."

With a shudder, Maxwell Drewitt turned his head away, and laid it on the furthermost pillow.

"Let him come," he said, faintly; "it may be that we have cross accounts to settle; let him come;" and Brian came accordingly.

"Maxwell," he began, "I am here to help you, if I can. I am here to make what poor reparation is in my power. There was a time," he went on, "when I swore I never would re-enter your doors at peace with you: over my dead mother's body, I renewed that oath; and I swore then that if ever I had a chance of vengeance offered me, I would

avail myself of that chance to the uttermost. Maxwell, I have recalled those oaths. I would undo that which I have done if I could. I want to help you, if in my power. Had I known who Arthur's mother really was, I would have cut out my tongue before bringing sorrow upon her. Do you believe me, Maxwell? I never spoke falsely to you in my life; and you may believe it is the truth I am telling you now."

There ensued a long silence, broken only by the sick man's sobs. "I am so ill," he said, "I am so weak—Brian, I thank you—I will take your offer, I will trust you. If you will, there shall be peace between us at last. Do you forgive me?"

"You are pressing me hard, Maxwell," answered the other. "Hearing what I hear, guessing what I guess; with my dear ones where no reparation can be made to them, I cannot say I forgive. But I may try to forgive; will that content you?"

"And you will stay with me, Brian, you will stay. I am so sick, and I am so lonely. It was a fall off the chesnut did it; but I suppose you heard all about that?"

"Yes, poor Madcap!"

"It was not her fault, it was that fool of a

Crabbe—it has made wild work with me, Brian, has not it? I shall never be a man again while I live—never!"

While he lived. Brian, keeping watch by the sick man's bed-side, knew that his existence could not be prolonged much longer, and looking at that poor wreck of mortality—at that old worn man—he found it hard to identify him with the Maxwell he had last seen standing just within the hall door of that house in which he was at length master.

Then he had been handsome, strong, resolute; now he was a stricken and hesitating creature, dying by inches, while there was not a human being related to him, by any close ties of blood, to take his hand and bid him be of good cheer, as he glided onward to that valley where is the blackness of the shadow of death.

CHAPTER XII.

BRIAN'S REPENTANCE.

BEFORE many days Mr. Pryor appeared at Durrow, anxious to know what had become of Arthur, and how Brian and his cousin were settling their old scores.

As for Arthur, Mr. Connor informed him the lad was still lying concealed in one of the caves in Durrow cliff—"the secretest of all their hiding-places, Skerritt informs me," he proceeded—"a cave that no gauger or coast-guardsman could find out unless he were the devil."

"Then, as I never heard of the devil taking the form of an exciseman, and going about the country looking after private stills and cargoes of smuggled goods, I suppose we may conclude there is every chance of the young gentleman getting off safe."

"He'll get off right enough, the first time the schooner comes round this way again. The reward Mr. Drewitt has offered ought to put the men on their mettle—not, to do them justice, that they need such an inducement—it's enough for them to know that a man is flying from the constituted authorities, and they will strain every nerve to assist him to escape."

"That characteristic of your country-people it is which makes Ireland so much pleasanter a residence for rogues than for honest men," remarked Mr. Pryor.

"Ah, well, sir; sure you see by this that even very respectable fathers may have sons in trouble."

"I hope you do not call Mr. Drewitt a respectable father, because, in my opinion, he is nothing of the kind," answered Mr. Pryor.

"He is fond of the boy, at any rate," said Connor, simply; and his thoughts flew back to that night when through the storm Maxwell drove his son over to Durrow, and had stood silent while Arthur wept tears of penitence upon his neck.

"He'll never get the better of it, Mr. Brian tells me," went on the agent, pursuing his own train of

reflection. "He was wet to the skin, and has not been able to be out of bed since. Well, let him have been what he will, Mr. Pryor, you would be sorry for him if you were to see him now—just a shadow of himself, and with the grey hairs more plentiful than the black, and crow's feet about his eyes, and a drop of the mouth, and a twitching of the face that you would wonder what ailed him."

"I think I'll go over and see him," observed Mr. Pryor.

"Indeed, sir, and I just would," agreed Connor; "maybe the day's not so very far off when you'll be glad to remember you did it."

"Do you mean, Connor, you really think he is going to die so soon as all that comes to?"

"Think, sir! I am sure I believe in my heart he'll never rise from his bed again; that he did his last piece of work in this world, the night he came over here with Mr. Arthur. I did all I could to get him to stop, and so did my wife, too; but he was so mortally afraid of any of the Duranmore people guessing where his son was hid away, that nothing would serve him but round with the horse's head and back to Kincorth, though the wind was coming down from among those hills, and blowing

off the Atlantic, fit to tear the house down. And then it began pelting with rain. I don't know how he ever got home, and him in the state of health he was—I do not."

Next morning Mr. Pryor walked over the hills to Kincorth, to pay his visit to Maxwell Drewitt.

"He will see you if you come upstairs," Brian said, in answer to the Englishman's inquiries; "but I must warn you that he is very ill—dangerously ill, in my opinion. I have thought it right to tell Lady Emmeline what I believe about him; and it is very probable she may be here to-morrow afternoon."

"Are you glad you came, Brian?" asked Mr. Pryor.

"I would not NOT have come for all the property Maxwell owns;" and Brian, who was head nurse in the sick-room, led his friend gently to the darkened chamber, which Maxwell was never again to leave till he was carried out in his coffin.

"You were right about me, Mr. Pryor," said Maxwell. "I was not an honest man; and I did not come into Kincorth fairly; but Brian shall get it back again when I am gone; and I hope he will have more enjoyment of it than ever I had."

"I trust," answered Mr. Pryor, "you will live for many a long year to keep him out of it. Brian will be better and happier working for his living in London than he ever could be dawdling about Kincorth."

He spoke these words cheerfully and heartily, but Maxwell shook his head.

"My race is run," he said, "my day almost finished; and if I could but once know the boy was safe, I am so tired that I think I would lay my head down and never raise it again."

"You will think differently when once he is clear off," answered Mr. Pryor.

"Shall I?" and Maxwell's hand strayed idly and listlessly over the coverlet, picking bits of cotton out of it while he spoke.

"Why of course you will; anxiety is the chief thing that is the matter with you now."

"Is it?" and the poor wasted fingers still kept picking, picking.

"I don't know what I should have done without him," he said, after a short pause, turning his eyes towards Brian. "I could not have lived so long had I been alone. He has been gentler to me than any woman I ever had about me; and when I look

at him I think of his mother, and believe she has forgiven me——"

"You can clear that matter up, about Harold," suggested Mr. Pryor.

"Yes, when I am gone, and when Arthur is off, you will find a parcel and letter in that safe over there. You can make what use you like of both; of course they would not take any proceedings at this distance of time, but you will settle that with them, won't you?"

"And I mean to settle that you shall not talk any more at present, and that if Mr. Pryor comes here to discuss unpleasant topics he must be forbidden the house," broke in Brian.

"Will you come to my house, then, to-morrow, to dinner?" asked Mr. Pryor; and Brian promised that if his patient were no worse, he would; having received which assurance, Mr. Pryor walked back over the hills as he had come, and noticed as he walked a wicked-looking little schooner tacking and tacking between Duranmore Point and Durrow. "That is our friend," he thought, "and twenty-four hours more will see Arthur out of the country."

"Yes, sir, that's her," remarked Skerritt with a

knowing wink. "She is only making believe tacking about there; she is really bound for Mayo, and then she will be back here about this time to-morrow. We have sent word to the captain, and it will be all correct."

Mr. Pryor was truly rejoiced to hear it, and said so. It was wretched to think of that lad lying in the cave night after night while he slept comfortably in a good house close at hand; and his sympathy was strongly excited for the unhappy father, whose first question when he awoke in the mornings was always, "Has Arthur got off yet?" and whose last sigh at night sounded like a moan for the son who had made such grievous shipwreck of his life.

"You will bring me back a report of how things are going on, Brian," he said as his cousin was leaving for Durrow; "a true report, remember,—promise me that;" and Brian promised ere he departed.

It was a lovely afternoon in the early part of October; the trees about Kincorth were getting very bare of foliage, but there were still enough leaves left to make the woods look very beautiful in their autumnal deckings of brown and orange and gold. The sky was clear and bright, and though there was

a stiff breeze blowing, Brian after long watching in his cousin's sick room found the wind only make his walk the pleasanter.

He did not feel in bad spirits as he climbed the hill and pursued the short cut towards Durrow; rather, on the contrary, his heart was lighter than it had been for many a day past, for he began to be certain Arthur would effect his escape safely, and he knew if the youth were once landed in France that a load of anxiety would be lifted from his shoulders, a burden of self-reproach taken off his soul.

It was a delicious afternoon; there was just that feeling of chilliness in the air which is pleasant when a man who can walk fast has likewise to walk far; and Brian hurried over the ground feeling that there are some days in the year when living is a pleasure, and that this was one of them.

But yet, as he drew near Durrow, he fancied he saw on the side of the hill, looking seaward, something which alarmed him—a man with a telescope. Brian immediately charged down the incline, and came upon a commonplace-looking individual apparently engaged in digging up bait.

It seemed a strange place to select for such a

purpose; but of course the man had a right to choose an inconvenient position if he chose, and Brian remained talking with him for a few minutes while he looked about to see if he could discover any trace of the telescope or discover what part of Durrow was best commanded from the spot.

The whole of Durrow village was concealed by Durrow cliff, and there was nothing to be discerned except the south side of the principal rock, which rose sheer out of the sea which now washed its base.

Any trace of the telescope he failed to detect, though he could have sworn he saw the brass tube glitter for a moment in the afternoon sun.

"He was there, was he, the divil!" remarked Skerritt, whom Brian at once informed of the circumstance. "I wish I had caught him at his spying. You're not sure he was spying, arn't ye? Well, I am, and that's enough. Digging earthworms, too, for a make-believe! Pity he wasn't feedin' them, that's all I have got to say."

"Will it hinder Arthur getting away?" asked Brian, anxiously.

"Will it hinder the say comin' in to-morrow morning?" inquired Mr. Skerritt, which, being

decidedly an unlikely result, Brian took heart again.

"Are you going out fishing to-night, Skerritt?" inquired Brian, noticing that the man was preparing his nets and getting his boat ready for sea.

"I go out fishing most nights," was the answer; "and now, sir, if you are as tired of asking questions as I am of answerin' them, I wish ye just would go up till the house, and stay in your proper place, which is up there with the quality,* instead of down here with me."

"Your best friends can't say much for your civility, Skerritt," remarked Brian as he moved away.

"If I am not very civil I am very wise," was the significant answer; and Brian departed on the instant.

"I wish to-night was over—and well over," said Mr. Pryor, as they stood together on the lawn, while the afternoon light faded away, and the twilight deepened, and the darkness drew on.

"And so do I. Have you any notion at what hour they mean to make their venture?" returned Brian.

* Gentlefolks.

"Not the least. Skerritt would give me no information on the subject, and I have not seen a sign of the schooner to-day. The first intelligence I expect to hear is that he is off safe and sound, and half-way to France."

"Heaven grant it!" Brian replied.

The words were scarcely out of his lips before there arose such a shout from the shore, as made Mr. Pryor and Brian exclaim, at the same moment—

"There is something wrong: let us go down;" and they ran round to the shelving side of the cliff, and hurried down the path leading to the sea.

"They have found the cave," explained Skerritt; "and they are all here, police, and gaugers, and soldiers, and all."

"And where is Arthur?"

"You'll see in a minit," was the reply. "Now Patsey, my man. Run down for your life, Mr. Arthur, and out into the sea!" he cried in a voice like thunder, and, at the same instant, there flared out from the shore a flame of light that just flashed across the waters and then was extinguished.

Quick as thought, another light glanced out from

the little schooner, which had been quietly stealing round a line of rocks that stretched far away into the ocean; and, next moment, while his eyes were still dazzled by the sudden glare, Brian heard the plash of oars, and knew that Arthur was safe in the boat and making for the vessel that alone could ever bear him to freedom.

Hoarsely the command for the boat to stop rung out through the night, and, as a mocking laugh came back across the waters, the corporal gave the order to fire.

Three balls went instantly whizzing over the sea; and then there was a shriek such as Brian never had heard in all his life before—the shriek of a strong man in his death agony.

But the boat went on.

"Fire!" was again the command, and again the balls sought their mark: no shriek followed this discharge, and, for a minute or two, the corporal seemed to think his men must have made some mistake, but it was only for a moment.

The next, cries for help were borne by the wind to the shore, and there were frantic entreaties among the women that a boat might be launched on the instant.

"Lord help you, mother," said Skerritt's son; "don't you remember every boat was sent to Duranmore, that they might not be able to get the advantage over us that way? but then if he is not hit he can swim. There it is again! That's not my father's shout, it is the young fellow's, and the boat is settling."

The boat was settling. Every one of the balls, except that which struck Skerritt, had gone through her side. There can be no doubt but that the men must have happened to fire as she rose on the waves; and now, with their hands loosely holding their muskets, they stood listening to the screams of the drowning men.

"I can't bear this," cried Brian; "I must do something;" and he made a rush towards the sea, but half a dozen people were before him in an instant, and kept him back from his design. "Have you not got a boat?" he gasped.

"Not one. Do you think if we had, it's myself would be talking to you now, and my own father and brother out there in the middle of it all?"

"How many were there altogether?"

"Just three; and, out of the three, there were two of us."

"God pity you," said Brian, as he sat down on the shore. "And God pity me, too," he added to himself, "for this is my doing."

There was silence on the sea,—silence only broken by the whistling of the wind—by the plashing of the waves against the rocks.

Each moment it was growing darker and darker, and though the people under the cliffs were running hither and thither with lighted torches in their hands, still nothing could be seen of the tragedy that had just been enacted.

Sullenly the sea came rolling up on the shore—sullenly it swept along, wave succeeding to wave, and billow to billow: though they strained their eyes out into the night they could see nothing but a waste of water, but an eternity of ocean.

Till morning dawned they would not be able to distinguish any object, and when morning dawned where would be the objects they desired to see?

"I'll go and get a boat some place or other," whispered young Skerritt to his mother, "and I'll row round the rocks; may be one of them may have drifted that way with one of the oars."

It was a forlorn hope; but perhaps in the future

it comforted that widow and her son to know everything which could be done, had been done.

There was no one near the rocks, no one had reached the schooner; but a week afterwards Skerritt's body was washed ashore near Clew Head, while Arthur's drifted into a little bay about five miles north of Durrow.

"It was better than being caught," Mr. Pryor ventured to say at length to Brian; "but I am grieved about Skerritt."

"And it is all my doing," Brian moaned out; "I shall feel now like a murderer to the end of my days."

For hours Brian sat repeating this one sentence, and it was not until Mr. Pryor reminded him Maxwell would be expecting tidings, that he could rouse him from his fit of despairing remorse.

"I think I had better go round with you and break the news to him," said the barrister.

"No, I will do it—I—and I only," answered Brian.

"But it will be so dreadful a task for you."

"Only part of my punishment," he said, with a sort of gloomy satisfaction; "and I was so happy to-day, and I made so certain he would get off."

And as he thought of that, he sat down and covered his face with his hands once more.

"Brian," said Mr. Pryor, "some one must go to Kincorth and break this news to Maxwell; if you do not go I will, for otherwise he will hear it suddenly, and in his state of health a shock of the kind might prove fatal."

"Come with me then!" exclaimed Brian, "I have not courage to go alone." And accordingly they drove round to Kincorth by the same road as that Maxwell Drewitt had followed when he took his son to Durrow.

It was late when they reached Kincorth, but the sick man was still awake, and anxiously expecting Brian's return.

He knew, the moment he saw his cousin and Mr. Pryor enter the room together, that some misfortune had happened.

"You bring me bad tidings," he said.

"I have no good news," Brian answered.

"He is taken?"

"No, he is not taken; he has escaped that fate."

"What do you mean?—if he is not taken, he must have escaped; or has he not got off yet?

Will neither of you speak?—there, you need not tell me, I know the worst—he's dead."

Brian knelt down by the bedside and buried his face in the coverlet. Mr. Pryor took one of the wasted hands in his, and drawing a chair close up to Maxwell's pillow, told him how his boy had been drowned, how the very efforts they had made to secure his escape had caused his destruction.

Very quietly Maxwell listened to him; through the night he talked of nothing else, but still Brian knelt by the bedside with his face hidden in the coverlet, praying in a very agony of supplication to the Lord Most High.

This was vengeance! this was what he had longed for, waited for; this was the end of all his oaths, of all his hate, ay, and of all his love—a terrible memory which should abide with him to the end—a gnawing remorse which, though its teeth might get less sharp in time, was yet certain never quite to loosen its hold upon him.

This was vengeance: he would have given his life to be able to live the past year over again with his present experience, retaining his present feelings. Oh, for power to wipe the sin he had committed off his conscience, to bring that boy to life

again, to restore even comparative health to his cousin!

This was vengeance—to pass through such agony as he had never felt before, to wrestle with his anguish, to have to rise up and face his misery, to hear Maxwell's voice saying faintly, "Do not vex yourself about it, Brian; I am content that it should be so."

This was vengeance. Like him who, in the olden days, drew a bow at a venture and slew the king of Israel, so Brian had drawn his bow at a venture, and this was the ruin his arrow had wrought.

Still the waves rolled on and the sea mourned upon the shore; still the wind blew keen over the ocean, and the billows tossed and lamented, and the deeps called out to one another through the night; still in the darkness the great mountains stood proudly aloof; still Mr. Pryor talked while the thin fingers picked the cotton more restlessly out of the coverlet, for the end was very nigh at hand, and Maxwell Drewitt was soon about to pass into that unknown land which is so "very far off."

CHAPTER XIII.

SICKNESS UNTO DEATH.

LADY EMMELINE arrived from London on the day following that on which the tragedy recorded in the last chapter was acted out, and with her came Mrs. Ellenham, who repaired, on hearing of her brother's illness, by command of her husband, to the Euston Square railway station, where she proceeded *viâ* Holyhead and Kingstown to Galway.

She had never been in Ireland from the day of her elopement, until she travelled back thither to see her brother on his death-bed, and she would not have gone then, only the law of Colonel Ellenham was as that of the Medes and Persians, and if he said, "go"—which he did in hopes of a bequest—there was no alternative but to pack up and depart.

Poor Lady Emmeline was inexpressibly shocked

at sight of her husband. All the love she had once felt for him woke to life again in a moment, and she wept as genuine tears as she had ever shed in her life when he put up his white lips to kiss her.

They had lived latterly like cat and dog, but yet she once loved him, and she loved him now again when he lay dying, thinking, thinking not of her, but of many a more attractive woman, and most of all of Jenny Bourke, whom he could see standing by the stream at the back of her brother's cottage in all the beauty of her young loveliness, so innocent, so pure, so tender, and so true.

As for Susan, her brother saw her, but that was about all he would do. From others she heard the story of his unhappy son; from others she learned how her husband was mixed up in the matter.

"I would go back to London at once," she said to Mr. Pryor, "if I were not afraid." And accordingly, as she was afraid, she remained at Kincorth, keeping as much out of the way as possible, and generally conducting herself after a fashion as unlike all the fashions of Susan Drewitt as can well be imagined.

Matrimony, or perhaps the absence of matrimony

for so many years, had tamed her effectually, and so she roamed about the place and looked at the improvements, and wondered if Brian would get Kincorth back again, and wrote long explanatory letters to her husband, and was considered a very quiet kind of lady by the servants.

As for Brian, he never left the sick man by day nor by night; and when the end drew very near, when every one saw that the sickness could never be cured, the disease never mastered; when it became a question not of weeks but of hours, Maxwell could not bear his cousin to leave him for an instant.

They had been at deadly feud once, but they were united now; they had been bitter enemies, but they were now fast friends; and it was Brian, who, when the last moments came, wiped the damp dews off Maxwell's face, and held his hand while he passed through the portals of death.

Thus he departed. Many a time since, Brian Drewitt has recalled that scene.

It was noon—noon on a dull, damp November day.

The sick man had been lying all the morning thinking, thinking, and at last he began to talk.

"What's that you are saying?" he broke out —and Brian knew from his tone that he was wandering—"That I made nothing? Give me those maps—reach me those plans;" and then he went on muttering some words which Brian could not catch. "There is The Headlands," he said, in a louder key, "and Cherryfield, and the Calgillan estates. Isn't it getting very dark, eh? What's that? Are you there, Brian? Have I been asleep?"

"I don't know. Do you feel tired?"

"No; but it is time I was getting to sleep—these winter nights are very dark. Ring for lights, Brian, I cannot bear this gloom."

Brian knew then what was coming, and rose and put his strong arms about his cousin, and lifted him up a little.

"Can you see any better now?" he said.

"No; it is all darkness, all; Brian, is it night or day? Is it light to you?"

"It is day, Maxwell, though a very dull day, and I can see well enough."

"Then this is death," he said; and he stood at last face to face with the foe he had dreaded all his life.

There was an utter silence for a moment, during which Maxwell appeared to be solving some problem in his mind.

Over and over he appeared to be turning the question, while his dim eyes moved restlessly about, as though striving to catch some gleam, however feeble, of light.

"It grows darker," he said, at last, and the cold dew of death was on his forehead.

"It grows darker—don't leave me, Brian." But Brian had no thought of leaving him.

He had lived without God, but he should not die without man—that was the idea which passed swiftly through his cousin's mind.

"Do not let me go," he murmured; and the hand which Brian held tight in his, grew cold as marble.

"I think I have made a great mistake,"—he spoke these words out so loudly, that Brian almost started, and they were the last he ever uttered. The problem was solved, the life-story finished, the purpose accomplished, the end of all earthly things reached; and with a sigh, Maxwell Drewitt, who had raised his head a little, fell back dead on his pillow.

That was the end.

He laboured and planted, he sowed and reaped, he got him great possessions, he amassed wealth in abundance, he accomplished what he said he would; he made the howling wilderness a smiling plain; he found Headlands a wretched piece of barren land, and he left it an Eden. Whatsoever his hand found to do, that he performed; whatsoever his mind planned, that he executed; and yet when he spoke the last words of his life—when he summed up the whole story of his endeavours and his successes—it proved to have been all "a great mistake."

Pitiful! most pitiful! In his prime this man was taken away from among his treasures—from the place he had longed to possess—from the country of his birth—from the scenes he had loved to gaze over. What did it matter, then, whether he had been rich or poor, wealthy or indigent, lofty or lowly, peer or peasant?—what did it matter? what even in life had the lands and the houses, had the silver and the gold, profited him?

"I think I have made a great mistake." Was that sentence spoken in time or in eternity? Was it uttered as his last farewell to earth, or when he had passed into the land of shadows? His

soul was on the threshold of both worlds at the moment—to which world was the truth addressed? Was it spoken with the gloom he had complained of settling down upon him, or with light ineffable flooding the secrets of our humanity, and making all those things plain which here we see but as through a glass darkly?

Draw down the blinds, and tread lightly across the room, wherein there is no life left, but only the body which once held a soul.

Maxwell Drewitt has passed into that dim land which he so dreaded to face. He has gone away, and left his work to be taken up by another after him.

Never more may he walk by the sea shore, or stand under the arching trees that shade the avenue, or ride by lake and river, past mountains and through the valleys—never more for ever.

His works remain after him, but he himself is departed into that silent land where no echoes of the waves of time can reach the ears of the sleepers.

With great pomp and ceremony, with grandeur befitting his wealth and his influence, and the height to which he had climbed, they bore him to Eversbeg Abbey, and laid him down to rest.

There, so near to where he made his first start in life, he sleeps well—free from ambitious hopes, from regretful longings. From all dreads, from all alarms, he is delivered at last. The unquiet heart is still, the busy mind hushed into repose. The summer's sun comes each year and falls warm and bright on the graves in Eversbeg; but the summer's sun cannot quicken the cold body into life.

The great mountains rear their blue summits to heaven, the lakes ripple and ripple, the rivers flow onward to the sea, and the boulders and the blocks of granite lie scattered about on the hill sides—the great Atlantic beats against the iron-bound coast, and up the thousand bays the waves steal gently as ever—on that strange country through which Maxwell rode when he was still young, when he had life all before him, the moon looks down with as cold a light, playing as many fantastic tricks, creeping up the hills, and lying in the waters just as she did then.

And in the dancing sunlight Kincorth is beautiful as of old; but the man who coveted Kincorth, —who vowed to have it, who declared before God

that neither woman nor devil should keep it from him,—where is he?

Lying with the rest of his kindred amid the ruins of Eversbeg, slumbering with the ivy trailing over his tomb, with the birds chattering all the day long above his head, dreamlessly, until the hour comes when he shall have to give an account of that life concerning which he said—he had made a great mistake.

CHAPTER XIV.

BRIGHTER DAYS.

WHEN Maxwell Drewitt's will came to be read, it was discovered that he had left everything which he possessed to his son; but, as Arthur died before Maxwell, this will became of none effect, and Brian, the heir-at-law, succeeded to the properties.

And what properties they were! There had never been a Drewitt so rich for many a long day —never been a Drewitt without mortgages—without debt—without incumbrances, until Maxwell made his fortune, as I have told you, and left it for Brian to enjoy.

Amongst the dead man's papers were found the notes which had been stolen from Mr. Kearns; and these were delivered to the Dundalk and Drog-

heda Banking Company, in precisely the same state as that in which they were discovered.

Whatever could be done to clear Harold's memory from the stain that had lain on it, was done: there were paragraphs inserted in the newspapers; there were statements read in court; there were communications made to friends. Mr. Blosse was induced to open his mouth; and every one agreed that Harold had been shamefully treated; but that the whole proceeding was "just on a piece" with the rest of Mr. Maxwell Drewitt's performances.

"There is no chance now, old fellow, I suppose, of your coming into partnership with me," said Mr. Francis Gyton, when he and Brian met once more at Highgate. "Like all the rest of your countrymen, you will begin to turn up your nose at business —cut the money-making establishment altogether, and take to doing the idle and patriarchal."

"I'll tell you what I have a great mind to do," answered Brian.

"Listen attentively, Geraldine," said Mr. Gyton. "Crœsus has a great mind to do something; perhaps it may be something for our benefit."

"No, it is not," Brian replied. "I have a very

great mind to sell all those Irish properties, and go abroad."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed his brother-in-law elect.

"I hate the places!" went on Brian; "I hate the associations! I hate the country——"

"And you hate the people! That is right, go it, my boy!"

"I wish, Frank, that you would not interrupt me so continually," said Brian Drewitt, a little irritably. "There is no human being but myself," he proceeded, "can understand the misery I have endured in Ireland—nor the wretched memories it recalls! If I retain the properties I shall never reside in Connemara."

"You need not offer any of them to me, if that is your benevolent intention," said Mr. Gyton, hastily; "for I would not be hired to live in Ireland at a salary of ten thousand a year! It is all very well when the weather is fine—and it is all very well when you don't want much society; but it is the devil when it rains! and when one is shut up in the house all day—with a fine sea-view and the toothache! London for me!" finished Mr. Gyton. "I am of London, Londony; I am of

the streets, streety. I detest high tragedy; and your prodigious funerals; and your outrageous grief; and your excessive sensibilities; and your despairing remorse; and your eternal hatreds; and your desperate revenges, seem to me quite out of place in the civilized nineteenth century!"

"The end, and aim, and object of which civilized nineteenth century is to destroy all hatred, as it has destroyed all love!"

"Well, now, that is really too bad; what do you know about love, sir?—you who have, ever since I had the honour of making your acquaintance, been so occupied with a kind of Hibernian Vendetta that you have had no leisure even to look at a pretty girl, let alone fall in love with her."

"I was not talking about love of that sort, Frank," answered Brian; "but about all descriptions of love—love of friends, parents, children, sisters, brothers."

"If you have any compassion, Brian, do stop," entreated Mr. Gyton; "do not treat me to a long dissertation on vehement attachments, or never-to-be-forgotten griefs. Allow me to remark that, had you been born in any other country than in Ireland,

you would have been a much more agreeable individual than is the case."

"Now, Francis," interposed Geraldine.

"My sweet child, I am only speaking the truth. Had your brother stood in my shoes, he would either have been sent to Oxford or put to business about the time he began nourishing those romantic ideas on the subject of Kincorth, which ideas have, fortunately for him, been realised. Hem!—where was I?—oh! yes, at Oxford or the desk. There are two things in this world which leave a man very little time for developing his eccentricities, viz., business and pleasure. In a country where you have neither, as in Ireland, it follows naturally——"

"Excuse me interrupting you," observed Brian, "but Ireland is usually considered to be a very pleasure-seeking country."

"Is it really? where do the poor devils go to seek for it? Precious far afield I should say. It struck me as being one of the most melancholy corners of the earth that ever I set my foot in."

"Yet I suppose you will allow that there is a small portion of wit in Ireland?"

"There may be; I never heard any Irish wit excepting in England."

"Probably that was not the fault of the Irish," answered Brian, with a slight sneer.

"Thank you for the implied compliment. What I meant to say when you tripped me up so short was, that one hears a certain number of stock anecdotes on this side the channel which spoil one for ordinary Irish conversation. Every Dublin car-driver is not a wit; on the contrary, I have never heard a really clever speech from one of them, nor am I acquainted with any person who has. The manner is amusing, I admit; but the matter will not bear inspection: all of which brings me round to what I said at first. I would not have to reside in Ireland—indeed I would not reside in any place at a great distance from London for ten thousand a year."

"I certainly was not going to ask you to reside in Ireland," observed Brian.

"Then we need not fear any misunderstanding on the subject," remarked Mr. Gyton; "and you can proceed with what you were about to say."

"I have said all I was about to say."

"No, you have not; you were going to tell us why you thought of going abroad, where you in-

tended travelling to, and what you purposed doing when you had reached your destination."

"There is no use, Frank, in trying to talk seriously to you. Everything seems to you to bear a comical aspect. To hear you speak I am sure anybody might think the world was a place only intended by the Almighty for jibes and jeers, for the fool's motley, for the cap and bells."

"After all, the fool's bells make more lively music than the passing bells; which appear to be what you delight to listen to. In sober earnest though, Brian, I do hate to see a man, a wise man, taking life after your fashion. Is not there happiness in this world, is not there sunshine, are not there women's voices, are not there flowers, and birds and bees and butterflies? Do you think God ever intended we should let any sorrow or any suffering so dim our eyes that we should never again be able to look out on life with a sense of enjoyment, with a thrill of pleasure? Talk to him, Geraldine; tell him what a madman he is to dwell so sorrowfully on the past, instead of taking pleasure in the present. Brian," he added, and for the first time during their acquaintance there came a touch of passionate entreaty into his voice,

"Brian, my brother, for God's sake, put that unhappy boy out of your mind; bury your dead, and leave their graves, and come and stand out in the sunshine, so that you may make both yourself and those belonging to you happy once more."

With a gesture almost of despair, Brian lifted his head, and looking over the great city which lay below them, answered—

"It is too soon yet. You do not know, no man can know, what my life has been, what I have suffered, how I have sinned. You have never stood, as I have, at one death-bed after another, where the life had been either unhappy or wicked. Think of it, Frank: out of your own brighter experience, judge what mine must have been. Father, mother, brother, cousin, and cousin's son—all in five years. Those whom I wanted to make happy, whom I would have laid down my life to save from grief and trouble, are all gone where the wealth that is now mine is unavailing. I never was young; I never had a boy's heart; I never was like other men I met, gay and thoughtless and light-hearted. I think you are right, Frank, after all, and that I was wrong. I believe,

had I been brought up in England, I should have been a better man and a happier than I am ever likely to be now. Like Maxwell, I have made a great mistake."

"Well, rectify it then," answered Mr. Gyton. "It is not too late; it is never too late while you have breath in your body. I know what you were going to say: you were going to make some remark about that Arthur, whose death you have taken a fancy to charge at your own door. There never was a better day's work done for that young gentleman than when he was put so easily out of harm's way."

"What shocking things you do say, Frank!" remarked Geraldine.

"If being true makes things shocking, I have no doubt they are so," he replied; "but the fact is this. Supposing he had escaped drowning, he would have lived to be hung to a certainty. I am as positive of that as I am that I am living. Those are just the kind of youths who come as surely to the gallows, let them start from what point they may, as that the sparks fly upward. My uncle is of the same opinion; he thinks that for the sake of all parties interested it was a great blessing

Mr. Arthur Campnell, or Bourke, or Drewitt, or whatever his name might be, made his exit when he did. Just fancy that boy in possession of those properties. I ask you just to fancy it. He would have more misery than we should ever be able to estimate. Those notes! why you know the lad who could carry a thing of that kind through coolly must have been the making of a thorough scoundrel; and if it were only for the suffering he caused Harold, he richly deserved all he got."

"That was the way I argued," Brian groaned. "Heaven, forgive me!"

"There can be no worse article for every-day wear than a delicate conscience like yours; which first thinks it a duty to avenge the dead, and then turns round and repents having inflicted punishment on the object of its deadliest hatred. I think you were born a few centuries too late, Brian. You would have been a capital fellow for the sack-cloth and scourging days; and in one respect I think those days were a vast deal better than our own. Men then wore their sorrow out of sight, and their penitence too; now they go about with faces as long as my arm, making everybody they meet

miserable, because of some trifling sin that they chance to have committed in years gone by."

"That cap fits well, if it were made at random."

"I did not make it for you," answered Mr. Gyton, colouring with vexation at his own stupidity; "and I don't want to say anything to vex you, only take my advice. Come out of your shell—mix in the world—share its pleasures—enjoy its sunshine—don't go moping about the Continent alone, and beyond all things, don't go shut yourself up in those old Irish estates till you become a monomaniac. Look out for a nice wife—marry—and forget. If you have done wrong, you must try and do right for the future. If you have made a mistake, thank God it is not on your death-bed you have found it out; but with life, years of it before you, I trust, to make a better thing of than any Drewitt I ever heard of dreamt of attempting."

"What are you sermonizing about, Frank?" asked Mr. Pryor, who came at this moment into the room.

"I am preaching the doctrine of work and common sense in the ears of a morbid sinner," was the reply.

"And is he converted?" inquired his uncle, with a smile.

"Give me time," Brian answered, "give me time; only, of one thing be sure—I will not sit down with my hands folded and sorrow vainly. I will do my best. I will not fly my duties. I will not attempt to get rid of my responsibilities; and should it ever please God to remove the weight that is lying on my heart, I will become a laughing philosopher like you, Frank, and find sunshine in the darkest places."

"That is right!" cried Mr. Gyton, clapping him on the back; while Mr. Pryor went up to Brian and silently took his hand.

Perhaps the barrister could better estimate the length and breadth, and height and depth, of the agony that Brian had passed through than any other man on earth. He had traced the boy's progress to manhood, and seen how each year had brought its trial, each day its necessity for self-command and self-forgetfulness.

He knew, who better? how long even a slight wound takes to heal with some mental constitutions, and he could not marvel at the effect all his trials had produced on Brian Drewitt.

For himself, it was many a long day before he could forget either that night-scene on the coast of the wild West, or that darkened room to which the man who had thought once no domain large enough for him, was confined at last.

His life had been prosperous, but the end was so unutterably sorrowful that it left an impression on Mr. Pryor's mind like the wail of a mournful melody, or the sobbing of the wind among the pines at night.

Unmourned, unlamented, the man had passed to his long home, without one to weep over him and say, "Alas! my brother."

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It was autumn in Connemara once again; the hills were clad in their robes of purple heather, and the country looked its loveliest, and there was a great peace on land, on lake, on sea; while under the arching trees a bridal party came forth from Kincorth; for the daughter of the house was going to be married to the man she had loved for so long.

As a matter of choice, and as a matter of convenience, the bridegroom would certainly have preferred that the wedding should be solemnized in London; but it was a fancy of Brian's that Frank Gyton should take his sister from amongst her own people; that in the place where she had been born she should be married; that with much stately ceremony, with every festive rejoicing, the son of the English merchant should mate with the daughter of the Irish gentleman.

Brian would not have been a Drewitt had he not been likewise proud, and it was more out of pride than out of ostentation that he prepared so great a feast, and bade so many guests to partake of it. Duranmore had never seen such a wedding before: such strings of carriages, such strewing of flowers, such passing under wreaths and garlands,

was unprecedented even in a place where many a well-born bride had been wooed, and won, and married.

It was a gay sight, and the hearts of the tenantry rejoiced to see such a cavalcade leaving the gates of Kincorth. Many a day it was since such a festival had been held at the old home of the Drewitts; and it seemed, as the people said, like the good old times come back again when the bride, blushing and happy, walked out of the church porch, leaning on her husband's arm, and passed through the people who had known her from a child, receiving blessings and praises as she went by.

Half the county was at the wedding, and there were great folks from London staying at Durrow, and the whole country side was alive with carriages and servants, and spectators and guests.

Lady Emmeline graced the scene with her presence, and presented the bride with some sweet verses of her own composition, which she secretly hoped might be read aloud at the breakfast.

She was looking very old and very haggard, poor lady, but she enjoyed that wedding immensely,

and told everybody how fond she had always been of Geraldine, and how "many people had taken them for mother and daughter when they were in London together."

Mr. Gyton was in great force; he was perfectly stupendous in the way of waistcoat, and gold chain and pocket-handkerchiefs. He drank champagne, and he grew pathetic; he partook of all manner of good things, and did such justice to the viands set before him that Frank Gyton sent round a card to Brian Drewitt, on which he had written, in pencil—

"I hope there is a clever doctor among the company—dread apoplexy."

Altogether it was, as Mr. Gyton, junior, declared, enormously jolly.

"I think that everybody should come to Ireland to be married," said one tremendous young swell, who turned R into W in the most cruel and unintelligible manner imaginable. "I think every body should come to Ireland to be married, it is such fun."

"Yes, and the ten miles' drive gives one such an appetite," remarked Mr. Gyton, senior.

"And, Frank, what did you mean about the

climate?" asked his mother. "We have had three days without a single drop of rain."

"That is because it never rains single drops in Ireland," was the reply; "they always fall plenty at a time."

"Well, now, you know this is charming," said one City man. "If one could make certain of not being shot, I think I should like to end my days here."

"Did you ever see such a view?"

"What a delicious house!"

"And how exquisitely furnished!"

"Don't you wonder Mr. Drewitt has never married?"

"Hasn't had the property long; was a clerk in Mr. Gyton's office in the City."

"Dear me, how singular!"

"And he proposed for her in her poverty?"

"Yes, and takes her from here with a handsome fortune, I am told."

"How romantic!"

"Virtue rewarded."

And so the talk ran on, while the groom's-man implored one of the bridesmaids to tell him who that wonderful piece of antiquity was, seated on the other side of the table.

"That, sir," said the young lady, demurely, "is my cousin, Lady Emmeline Drewitt."

"I am sure, I beg your pardon; really that is——"

"She is the widow of the late proprietor of Kincorth," proceeded Miss Vervensoe, who rather enjoyed her companion's confusion. "She is very wealthy, and has been considered very handsome."

"Really, now you speak of it—yes, to be sure, bears traces of having been very beautiful."

"I have never detected those traces myself," said the young Irish belle, "for it is little more than a tradition with us. Mr. Pryor, however, declares he can remember her a most graceful and fascinating woman when he stood for Duranmore in 1832."

"I had not the least idea Pryor was so old—1832 carries us back into the remote ages of antiquity."

"I suppose it does, to about the time the Pyramids were built," answered Miss Vervensoe, a little pertly. She had some pretensions to talent, and indulged in satirical poetry, and on her return home wrote some very smart lines descriptive of the wedding-breakfast generally, and of her conversational friend particularly.

"Are you coming to the ball to-night?" she asked.

Of course he was. Did not every one intend coming to it, or rather staying for it, who had got an invitation? "For his part," and here the speaker became slightly tender in his manner; "for his part, he quite agreed with Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Gyton, that everybody ought to come to Ireland to get married."

Which observation Miss Vervensoe shrined in her poem with an addendum of her own, to the effect that she thought a good many people would have to bring the wives with them.

On the whole, Miss Vervensoe was not a nice young lady; not a young lady it would have been well for Brian Drewitt to marry; though it was her mother's intention that he should marry her, if the thing were compassable.

Lady Emmeline, also, was very desirous that her sweetest "Anne" should become mistress of Kincorth; and Mr. Dolf Vervensoe told his daughter that he should think her a "damned deal cleverer even than she thought herself, if she could bring Brian Drewitt to book!"

But through that danger the young man passed

scatheless. He was not a person very easy to satisfy, either in the matter of beauty or of anything else; and accordingly, he waited, and waited, till, quite by chance, as it seemed to them both, he met one day with a bright, loveable, English country-girl, who had been brought up very quietly in her father's old-fashioned parsonage-house—whence Brian Drewitt took her to himself, without any fuss or ceremonial or excitement whatsoever.

Geraldine always declared he took a fancy to the girl because she resembled their mother; and Brian did not contradict her assertion.

When the spring was shyly putting out its soft green leaves—when the winter's frosts were over, and the winter's snows gone—when the balmy south wind began to blow, bringing flowers and buds on its genial breath, Brian Drewitt took his young wife home to Kincorth, which he has never talked of selling from that hour.

She was his home-angel! his sweet, pretty, cheerful treasure! and he told her so one day, when she began, in her winning way, to coax him to tell her why he ever married her—he, so rich! so grand! who might have wooed and won some

wonderful heiress—some great beauty; and he added, also, a statement which was true as Holy Writ—viz., that, when he first looked in her face, he felt its expression comfort him as nothing else had comforted him since that sad day when he stood beside his mother's coffin, and felt almost as though his heart were broken!

CONCLUSION.

THUS they were all at rest at last—they who had loved, and they who had hated; the years had passed by, and brought peace with them—peace to the dead—peace to the living.

As for Brian Drewitt, who is a good landlord and a faithful steward, he can think over the past now without anguish—without despair.

There was once a time in his life when, had any one foretold that into so quiet a haven his soul could ever drift, he would have derided the idea, and scoffed it to scorn; there was once a time when he lived but for vengeance—once—but that was gone.

Like a tale that was told—like a watch in the night—like a storm which was spent, so the great thirst for revenge had died out, and left, it might

be, a still greater grief, but a more holy feeling behind.

The draught he had once panted and sickened for—the power to ruin Maxwell—to hurl him from his pinnacle of worldly greatness into the very depths of poverty—never slackened his feverish thirst, it is true; but he had drained another goblet to the dregs, and found at the bottom, bitterness—in its sweetness, death.

Well, it was all over now; the desire, the sin, the remorse—the fever which had once dried up his very blood—which had burnt and consumed him —which had eaten into his heart and torn at his vitals, had subsided; and he now looked back at the days and the years of his awful sickness as one might who, having recovered from the frenzy of madness, tries to recall the sensations, and the events and the phases, and the once great leading passion of his lunacy.

So he looked back from a safe and sure haven at last, over the waves of that troublous ocean where he had waged so unequal a fight; where he had seen his purest and best hopes shipwrecked; where he had beheld *her* go down amongst the billows, never to rise till eternity again; where he

had struck out madly to reach his enemy; where after years he stood by the shore watching Maxwell sink lower and lower in the flood, proclaiming with his last breath that life had not been to him all happiness—that somewhere, or all through, he had made a great mistake.

The storm had swept by, but it had left traces behind it—such traces as, that wife, nor child, nor friend, ever after saw Brian Drewitt laugh.

He said he was well and happy; and so he was; but such passions as had dwelt in his breast are enemies who never quit a man without leaving tracks of sorrow and traces of sin, long deep scars and ugly furrows behind them, that not even the soft caresses of his loving wife, the sunshine of domestic happiness could entirely heal.

There was a shade, even to that bright sunshine; for long after his lips had ceased to pronounce her name; when to mere casual observers the sore seemed healed, the wound cicatrized; when children climbed his knee, and young tongues called him father, and tiny hands clutched his hair, and little essayists in the sublime mystery of walking came toddling towards him, forcing the grave, stern face to relax and smile—Brian Drewitt was still

weeping at heart for her who had been his mother.

Whenever he visited London, he often took long morning walks alone, and by his resolute persistency in refusing her companionship his sister knew whither he was gone.

In one direction he invariably turned his steps—to that churchyard where, as I have said, the setting sun casts its departing rays on the graves of the loved and lost.

In that churchyard there is still one little piece of ground kept bright and beautiful by the living, in remembrance of the dead; and beside that grave Brian Drewitt will stand motionless, with his arms folded and his eyes fixed on the only inscription except her name which the white marble bears: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

THE END.

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